

# Ballet **TODAY**

THE INTERNATIONAL DANCE MONTHLY



● **BALLETS USA**  
*IN LONDON*

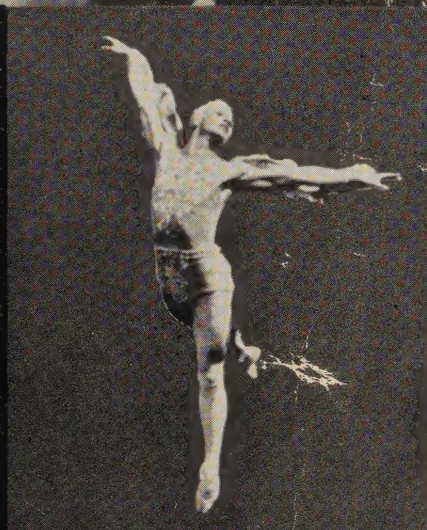
● **WALTER GORE'S**  
*NEW COMPANY*

● *INTERVIEWS WITH*  
**YURI SOLOVIEV**  
**IRINA KOLPAKOVA**  
of the Kirov Ballet

● *THE CAREER OF*  
**Royal Danish Ballerina**  
**MARGRETHE SCHANNE**

● *LONDON SEASONS OF*  
**BALLET RAMBERT**  
**FESTIVAL BALLET**

● **ROLAND PETIT**  
*BALLETS ON FILM*







*Nadia Nerina and Nicolai Fadeychev in a scene from 'Giselle'*

*Photograph by Houston Rogers*

*Like so many famous ballerinas  
Nadia Nerina wears ballet shoes  
made by*

**GAMBA**

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No. 8

Volume 13

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## COVER PICTURE

Left to right :

Jerome Robbins' Ballets U.S.A.  
in *N.Y. Export Opus Jazz*

Walter Gore and Ken Smalley  
have a breather from rehearsals  
to work out how to fit the scenery  
on to the stage of the Harrogate  
Theatre where the new Company  
were to play

PHOTO : IAN JAMES

Irina Kolpakova and Vladilen Semenov  
in *The Sleeping Beauty*

Yuri Soloviev  
as *The Blue Bird*  
PHOTO : IAN JAMES

Margrethe Schanne  
in *Pas de Quatre*

New ballet by Norman Morrice  
*A Place in the Desert*  
given by Ballet Rambert during  
their London Season

Zizi Jeanmaire and Roland Petit  
in a scene from the *Carmen*  
sequence of the film *Black Tights*  
Photo by courtesy of British Lion Films

Left to right : Belinda Wright, Ballet Today Editor Estelle Herf,  
teacher Kathleen Crofton, and Jelko Yuresha

PHOTO : IAN JAMES

## editor's log

### Dancers' Summer

SEEKING a photograph of Ruth Page's new ballet *Three's a Crowd* (reported last month), I wrote to her home town Chicago. In due course I received a courteous note from her husband's secretary saying Miss Page was in Europe. My letter finally caught up with Miss Page in St. Tropez in the South of France, where she was on holiday after visiting London and Paris. Alas, she said, she had no pictures with her, and the three dancers mentioned in her new ballet, Johnson, Klekovic and Kagan were currently dancing at Jacob's Pillow (U.S.A.)—there would not be time to contact them before we went to press. The original request and its subjects had completed full circle, all within the space of three weeks!

The last time I had a letter from Marina Svetlova she was in America, where she gravitates every year to teach in her summer school, but in August the largest-ever postcard arrived showing the glorious "Avenue 9 de Julio" and the Colon Theatre in Buenos Aires, where Marina was dancing as guest artist. In Argentina,

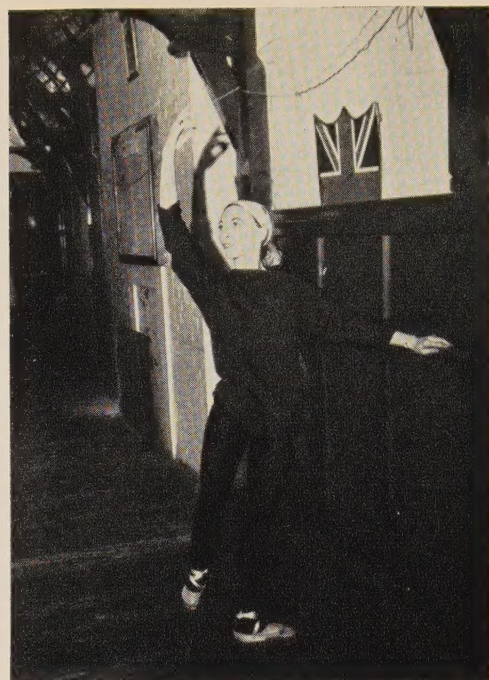
said Svetlova, it was bitter winter "but public very warm". After this date Miss Svetlova was off to tour South America.

From Toronto I heard that David Adams, premier danseur with the National Ballet of Canada since 1951 (in London with other dancers from the Company for further studies), had been offered a contract to dance with Festival Ballet. Two of the dancers, Glenn Gilmour and Edward Nicholls, accepted contracts with Walter Gore's new company to commence with the Company's first engagement in Edinburgh afterwards touring the provinces with them until it is time to return to Toronto to commence rehearsals in the autumn with the National Ballet for the 1961-62 season.

I am sorry I cannot print pictures of all the exotic places visited by the dancers during their summer, but I hope you will like the one above of Belinda Wright and Jelko Yuresha relaxing in the sunshine and peace of my English garden after a strenuous foreign tour followed by the London première of Bourmeister's *Snow Maiden*.  
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OUR NOVEMBER ISSUE WILL BE PUBLISHED ON 26th OCTOBER





*give them a place to rehearse . . .  
somewhere to paint the scenery . . .*

*a day with*

## *WALTER GORE'S NEW COMPANY*



*. . . . . and they're off*

*Top left*

Walter Gore at work in the old Queen's Theatre, Poplar, where the scenery for the London Ballet was painted. The theatre was closed in 1955.

*Top right*

Paula Hinton at the barre All Saints Parish Hall, St. John's Wood.

*Left*

Jane Evans, Simon Mottram, and Robin Haig rehearsing *The Fair Maid*.





The dancers take a look at the scenery being painted for *Giselle* Act II

**E**NTERING the All Saints Parish Hall in St. John's Wood the gloomy prognostications with which we in England greet the formation of a new Company immediately receded, how could we, in face of such tremendous enthusiasm, remain unmoved by it? "I cannot tell you", Walter Gore had written to me, "how much we are looking forward to beginning our tour"—and, with the endearing naivete which is present in all ballet folk—he added "the temptation is to take every one of the dates we are offered, instead of looking at them to see if they are financial".

Well that is the spirit behind the formation of all serious ballet groups, and in a money-mad world it is very refreshing. Without it, and the willingness to work very hard for very little to achieve something worth while, ballet would stultify. Give them a place to rehearse, somewhere to paint the scenery, and they're off. Our blessings go with them.

The Company's repertoire for this first tour will be *Les Sylphides*, *Giselle* Act II, *Eaters of Darkness* first produced by Gore for the Stadt. Bühnen Ballett in Frankfurt, *Peepshow*, the world première of *The Fair Maid* (Bizet) decor and costumes by Andrée Howard,



Andrée Howard (centre) designs the costumes for *The Fair Maid*  
ALL PHOTOS IN THIS FEATURE ARE BY IAN JAMES

*Night and Silence* which Walter Gore presented as a guest ballet and danced with Paula Hinton during the Rambert London season, *Lac des Cygnes* pas de trois, and the *Sassenach Suite* (Arnold). A section of the Company has already given a preview at the Hintlesham Festival, reported on page 12 this issue, and as we go to press has filled engagements at Edinburgh, Harrogate, Dublin and Oxford.

The Company consists of 25 dancers, the girls, led by Paula Hinton, include Jill Bathurst and Mary Coulson (both until recently with London's Festival Ballet); Jane Evans who was with Gore's earlier company and lately soloist with the Welsh National Opera Ballet; Barbara Krouthen (recently soloist with American Festival Ballet) and Robin Haig (Royal Ballet) were both with Gore on his Australian tour. Yemael Oved (who danced with the Edinburgh International Ballet and Het Amsterdams Ballet) and Anna Price (Western Theatre Ballet).

Walter Gore heads the boys (with Alexis Rassine as guest artist during the Edinburgh engagement). Simon Mottram (London's Festival Ballet), Ed Nichols and Glen Gilmour (two Canadian dancers from Celia  
*Continued on page 10*





"Hello, Ambako, how did you like the 'Othello' ballet?"

"I liked it immensely. But, frankly, I never thought he'd break into a dance after doing what he did to his wife."

by N. Malazonia

Photo by courtesy of  
British-Soviet Friendship

## CHOREOGRAPHER'S DAY

Arriving in Coventry for the recent Festival of Ballet I encountered Jack Carter browsing around the bookstall in the lobby of the hotel. Greeting him I noticed he was not quite with me. As the first performance of his *Festival Finale* was only two hours off I imagined he was worried about it. I knew he had only had forty-eight hours in which to prepare it.

My pictures, taken in Coventry by Mike Davis, show the two vital phases in a choreographer's day of 24 hours.



### Twelve Noon Wednesday

#### Final Rehearsal

The dancers know what is required of them but the choreographer cannot restrain the impulse to go through the motions. Jack Carter, Colette Marchand, John Gilpin

If you want to know what is to happen in London in several months' time read the French Press. Early this year newspapers carried headlines telling us "Margaret Awaits Her Baby". On returning home I found there had been no official announcement. In August a French magazine informed its readers that Nureyev would be dancing in London, with Margot Fonteyn, before the Queen. They jump the gun a little of course, because when I sought confirmation of this story in London I was told Nureyev is coming to London, will *not* dance with Fonteyn, and *not* before the Queen, but the news was not for publication.

My guess at the time of writing is that Nureyev has been "booked" by Dame Margot for her annual Gala in November. But excuse me whilst I read my French newspaper.

I hope you like my new series A DAY WITH . . . the first of which appears on page 4 this month. Next month we spend a day with Anton Dolin at his villa in Monte Carlo.

### JOHANNESBURG

Luisillo was finally married to the beautiful Maria Vivo in a Magistrate's Court in Johannesburg on the 26th August after attempts to marry in church had failed. The marriage was to have been conducted by the Bishop of Johannesburg but it is necessary for Roman Catholics who have been previously married to prove that the ceremony did not take place in a church, and it was felt that Luisillo's documents were not conclusive on this point.

On the previous day Luisillo had commenced a five-day farewell season at the Empire Theatre. The audience, reported our correspondent Mary Kenwood, "reaching a pitch of enthusiasm seldom seen equalled in this country". The couple are now taking a long holiday in Spain.

### Twelve Noon Thursday

#### Reading the criticisms

The first night is over, there is time to relax after the feverish preparation of the previous day. Was it all worth while? Let us see what the papers say.

Photos by Mike Davis



## News from here and there

### OSLO

Joan Harris who recently became Director of the Norwegian Ballet has been working hard with the Company since the 1st August in readiness for their opening on the 14th September at the Opera House, Oslo. From Tudor herself she has learned his *Lilac Garden*, a new pas de deux, revived *Soirée Musicale* and *Judgment of Paris*, and, for good measure, a waltz from *Faust* and the last movement of the ballet.

### SAN FRANCISCO

Gerhard Samuel, musical director and conductor of the Oakland Symphony Orchestra, has been appointed conductor for the San Francisco Ballet, succeeding Ottavio de Rosa, now director of the Ankara (Turkey) Opera Company. Samuel joined the ballet company for its July 16 performance in Sigmund Stern Grove.

### COLOGNE

Both pupils and teachers were very enthusiastic about the summer school held in Cologne this summer. Anton Dolin, who was teaching pas de deux, told me it was a most impressive sight to see 800 pupils from all over the world gathering together to improve their technique and knowledge of the dance, and expressed the hope that one day we might have something of the same nature in London.

### STOP PRESS

DAME MARGOT'S GALA: my guess was correct, it takes place at Drury Lane, 2nd November at 3 p.m. in the presence of Royalty and Nureyev will dance.



# LONDON

## REVIEWS

by FERNAU HALL

### JEROME ROBBINS' BALLETS: U.S.A.

WHEN the Jerome Robbins company arrived here for a one-week season in September, 1959, the great weakness of its single programme (as I noted in *Ballet Today* at the time) was the total absence of the dramatic aspect of ballet. This omission was repaired in the opening programme of the three-week season at the Savile Theatre (beginning 1st August) by the presentation of the new ballet *Events*, first shown in Spoleto a few weeks earlier.

Robbins has developed two types of dramatic ballet. One has a simple, clear story and is associated with the American world of the musical—good examples being *Fancy Free* (later developed into the musical *On the Town*) and the ballet-musical *West Side Story*. The other type is the relatively abstract dramatic ballet with a very involved and obscure theme—the prime example of this being *Age of Anxiety* (1950). He has far more talent for the former genre than for the latter, and one could not help feeling a twinge of disappointment when it became clear that *Events* (notwithstanding its jazz score by Robert Prince) was going to be abstract and obscure rather than follow an evolutionary path from the delightful *West Side Story*. All the same, it was interesting to see how Robbins would tackle a serious semi-abstract contemporary theme, using jazz music specially composed to fit his theme: this is a genre unknown to the professional ballet world here, though it has been exploited by modern-dance choreographers in America. In his background, outlook and style Robbins in fact bridges the gap between the classical ballet world and modern dance.

In a manner which is unfortunately characteristic of American modern dance, Robbins gave only a faint indication of his theme in the programme—which referred to “happenings, attempts and recoveries”. Ben Shahn’s first backcloth (with its abstract suggestion of skyscrapers) made it clear that the early scenes were taking place in an American big city, and in fact there was a fairly specific evocation of Central Park. Much of the beginning was very obscure indeed, apart from an evocation of disintegration in a short scene in which all the dancers produced jagged, frenetic movements, seemingly goaded by the harsh frenzy of the music.

There was the first hint of a specific theme in a pas de deux for two men. This began in a very casual way—suggestive of desultory conversation between acquaintances—but later developed into supported double-work in a way which parodied normal double work between a male and female dancer, and conveyed certain homosexual implications; the pas de deux ended as casually as it began.

The ballet first came to life in a scene dominated by the highly talented negro

dancer Jack Jones, moving through intricate patterns of mass movement. Here Robbins brought together a number of contemporary themes with success. Jones was the sportsman—above all the boxer—who is idolized by the public. He became arrogant, and went berserk, being forcibly restrained by the crowd. Then he performed an extraordinary dance full of mockery of himself and his admirers: in brief flashes we saw a satire of strip-tease, and a moment in which he pretended to eat a white girl and pour her blood over his face—combining a reference to the comically cannibalistic action by the Moor in *Petrushka* and a terrifying scene in Kathakali, *The Killing of Dussasana*. Finally he went off the stage wagging his head and shaking his hands, again like the Moor in *Petrushka*. He seemed to be saying that white people look on people of his race as brainless savages, and yet combine this with idolisation and confused sexual fantasies.

Unfortunately the rest of the ballet had nothing approaching this scene in vitality and expressiveness. There was a scene (possibly referring to the second world war) in which dancers manipulated long poles suggesting what are now called conventional weapons. Peace broke out, and the poles fell to the ground; but there was no let-up of tension—in fact tension got much worse, with frenetic movements and people coalescing into solid groups and marching against each other (Korea? Viet-Nam? Cuba?). Then fear got even worse, with the descent of a backcloth covering with dots suggestive of a chain reaction, people looking up (no doubt in terror of the atom bomb), an explosion, and people wriggling desperately, lying flat on the ground and presumably dying from radiation sickness. The ballet ended with extremely noisy music and a great hand descending to crush a dancer lying upstage centre. A great many ideas were flying about, but Robbins did not seem interested in giving a decisive and fully developed realization to any of them.

The music by Robert Prince showed the same understanding of jazz idioms and the demands of dancing as his fine score for *N.Y. Export, Op. Jazz*, and responded to the rapidly changing demands of the dramatic theme with intelligence and imagination. In fact the admirably effective communication of the music made *Events* much more easy to enjoy than the other ballet by Robbins in this abstract-dramatic genre, which had music as opaque as the choreography.

As for Ben Shahn’s decor, this fully lived up to the high standard this distinguished painter established in his work on *N.Y. Export, Op. Jazz*. The red skyscrapers loomed with an intriguing combination of foreboding and adventurousness, and the subsequent “chain reaction” backcloth made a fine contrast with its coldly

scientific patterns of black and white. The disintegrated body of the final scene, with its ominous hand reaching down, looked well enough when it hung in the air; but the effect when the hand dropped on the dancer was regrettably banal. One could hardly blame the designer for this: clearly he was giving the choreographer what he wanted.

All three of the other ballets in the first programme had been shown on the previous visit. The enlarged company (24 instead of 16), included among its dancers 13 who were not in the previous company, but showed the same unity of style and the same marvellous teamwork, making clear both the fine talent available in America and Robbins’ gifts as a producer.

*Moves*, danced in silence, made a slightly different impact from two years ago. The strongest impression was created by two early scenes: an acrobatic number for four men, in which the sound of their feet striking the ground in unison fell gratefully on the ear (reinforcing the visual rhythms), and some beautiful Oriental hand movements performed in the next scene by Patricia Dunn (who has a very Japanese body and face, and exquisite hands). But later scenes in which Robbins tried out such things as varieties of arabesque were rather ineffective. The recapitulation at the end (bringing together typical movements from all the sections in reverse order) was a clever idea, bringing the ballet to a tidy end, but could not make up for the dullness preceding it.

*Afternoon of a Faun* made by far the most consistent impact of any of the items, and was particularly exciting to watch because it now had its decor (missing from the earlier part of the season two years ago): the white, semi-transparent cloth walls of the classroom, and the mysterious lighting (both designed by Jean Rosenthal) gave a wonderful atmosphere of serenity and timelessness. The negro dancer John Jones was better than ever as the narcissistic male dancer, rapt in contemplation of the movements of his own beautiful body and hardly aware of the girl with whom he danced. Kay Mazzo was not quite as surrealistically entranced as Wilma Curley, but in view of the fact that she was only 15 her achievement was astonishing: with her very long legs and improbably perfect turnout and placing she made a very good counterpart to the slow somnambulism of John Jones.

*The Concert* was much as before, with delightful comic cameos from Patricia Dunn (as the prim housewife) and Muriel Bentley (as the languishing culture-vulture). William Reilly was amusing as the aggressive man with the horn-rimmed glasses and cigar, but failed to evoke quite the same atmosphere of mad, outrageous fantasy as Michael Maule two years ago.





## JEROME ROBBINS' SEASON

*continued from previous page*

*N.Y. Export Opus Jazz*

THE second programme (beginning 10th August) opened with a revival of *Interplay*, first produced in 1945 for a variety programme, and soon afterwards taken into the repertoire of Ballet Theatre. This was Robbins's second important work, and still remains one of his best, showing him perfectly at ease with a theme and a style he understands very well. The music by Morton Gould is mainly in the jazz idiom, with occasional divagations into more classical forms; Robbins's choreography is mainly classical (i.e. bringing together classical steps), but every now and then relapses into the jazz idiom, as if pulled irresistibly in that direction by the music. There are hints at children's games, and at one time a gently mocking parody of a minuet: Robbins shows American dancers looking at ballet as something rather quaint and old-fashioned—distinctly square—and yet great fun as well. In the revival Laurence Gradus (taking the chief male solo) caught the right note of gentle mockery and athletic anti-classicism, though he was not quite as witty as Paul Godkin; and he was well supported by three other men. But the women were little short of disastrous: they lacked style in the classical steps, and had none of the right lightness of touch. In fact it looked as if Jerome Robbins (for some unaccountable reason) put all his least talented danseuses into this ballet, when in fact it demanded artists with style and sensitivity, such as Muriel Bentley, Kay Mazzo and Patricia Dunn.

*The Cage* (first staged in 1951 for the New York City Ballet) is quite unlike anything else Robbins has done. At the superficial level this is a ballet about small animals living a communal existence—ants, termites, bees or some imaginary species of

communally-minded spiders. The females are quite self-sufficient, relying on each other for love, lust and comradeship in battle. Their normal reaction on seeing a male is to kill him. In very exceptional circumstances a male is tolerated for purposes of procreation; but the final result is always the same: he is eaten.

On the other hand the programme note and the whole tone of the ballet make it clear that Robbins is not really concerned with nature study; it is no accident he presents an imaginary community unlike anything in nature. The programme note refers us to mythology in which the female treats the male as prey, and states that "the ballet concerns such a race or cult".

But here again we find Robbins avoiding any reference to a precise myth of antiquity, such as that of the Amazons; his real concern is the generation of a modern myth, referring to contemporary society. His theme (like Thurber's) is the battle of the sexes, but his treatment of the theme is very different: the men exist to grovel on the ground, helpless prey to the all-conquering females (who are strongly masculine in a Lesbian way). This quite extraordinarily narrow and perverse view of the world is presented very directly and forcibly, but also very crudely, without poetry or imagination: when the female is killing the male, for example, she stamps her foot at his head, over and over again; then she squeezes his head between her thighs. As a result the ballet is more of a tract than a work of art. There is an allusion to Act II of *Giselle* which may be unconscious, but—considering how sophisticated is Robbins's attitude to ballet of the past, as shown in *Interplay* and *Afternoon of a Faun*—it is probably intentional: the Queen removes a sort of caul

from the Novice, who then bursts into action as a fully-fledged spider-Wili.

By far the most impressive feature of the revival was the dancing of Veronika Mlakar as the Novice. She was in fact even better than that fine dramatic dancer Nora Kaye, who created the role with great success in 1951. Veronika Mlakar was particularly good in putting subtlety and meaning into strange, twisting movements of hands and hips, and her face was wonderfully expressive—though even she could not rescue Robbins's choreography entirely from its melodramatic crudity. It was interesting to see this Yugoslav dancer, trained in the Russian school in Yugoslavia and also in modern dance, making the most vivid impression of any of the danseuses in Robbins's company—just as the South African dancer Michael Maule made the most striking impact among the men two years ago. The fact is that the Robbins company is essentially American in its style, and his choreography grows in the most positive way out of American ways of moving, thinking and feeling: but ballet is an art which can never be confined within narrow limits of nationalism.

It is impossible to imagine any other choreographer than Robbins finding suggestions for the theme and atmosphere of *The Cage* in Stravinsky's String Concerto in D, which was used to provide the music for the ballet—and we can be certain Stravinsky never had anything like this in mind. And yet Robbins worked out his treatment so cleverly that the music never once clashed with the choreography in any obvious way.

The programme ended with *N.Y. Export, Op. Jazz*, presented with much the same

*Continued on page 10*



# THE RAMBERT SEASON

## June Sandbrook in *La Sylphide*

A YEAR ago I suggested (in these columns) that June Sandbrook might make a good Sylphide. Her performance in the romantic, mysterious central role in *Night Shadow*, at the beginning of the Rambert season at Sadler's Wells, was disappointing, and augured poorly for the Sylphide she was due to dance later in the season; but when she did tackle the Sylphide on 24th July she soon showed herself to be admirably cast and perfectly at home in Bournonville's choreography; her actual dancing was not as polished as that of Lucette Aldous, but her characterisation was superb, and she brought out every change of mood so well that on balance her performance was the best yet of the Rosen production.

The most remarkable feature of her performance was her assured understanding of the Bournonville style. Her gestures were rounded, and she made all her points by exactness of placing and rhythmic precision rather than by a Russian bravura which would have been anachronistic. Even if one missed the soaring flights (suggestive of the Sylphide's immateriality) that Margrethe Schanne does so well, June Sandbrook gave a remarkably sincere and touching account of most other aspects of the Sylphide's nature—above all her delightful naïveté. Her grief and perplexity when James plighted his troth to Effie was admirable; so was her gaiety when she had James to herself out in the forest; and she rose magnificently to the tragic climax when James brought about her death: here was pain and grief and despair, but always with the nuance of naïveté so characteristic of Bournonville's Sylphide.

Both Shirley Dixon (Effie) and Gillian Martlew (Madge, the Witch) were if possible even more splendid than before; these two artists are so much at home in their parts they have no need to trouble about comparisons with the home team in Copenhagen. Unfortunately the male dancers of the Rambert company do not reach the same high international standard as the best of its danseuses, and Kenneth Bannerman's dancing as James lacked the fluidity, ease and nobility of the best Danes; on the other hand he has strengthened his acting considerably, giving James the right impulsiveness and obstinacy—showing this particularly well in his successive encounters with Madge.

## Gillian Martlew in *Night Shadow*

Gillian Martlew never ceases to astonish by her versatility: like Merle Park, she has such a wide range of dramatic ability (allied with a highly developed artistic sensibility and feeling for style) that one cannot imagine her being miscast in any role. This great artist, who embodies much that is finest in the traditions of the Ballet Rambert, is invaluable to the company—just as were her predecessors Peggy van Praagh, Sally Gilmour, Joan McClelland and Paula Hinton.

In the leading role in *Night Shadow* she was magnificent. Unfortunately the lighting was so dim it was impossible to appreciate the full dramatic intensity of her somnambulistic facial expression, but

her movements spoke volumes. Her command of the stage was so complete that even the most idiotic gimmicks (in the actions taken by the poet to manoeuvre the sleepwalker) took on some sort of mysterious poetry.

## A PLACE IN THE DESERT

The production of Norman Morrice's new ballet *A Place in the Desert* on 25th July, in conjunction with the performance later in the season of his two earlier ballets *Two Brothers* and *Hazana*, made it all too easy to see how this choreographer is developing.

*Two Brothers*, first produced in 1958, now has almost the air of a lucky accident. This ballet dealt with a familiar contemporary big-city theme—quarrels among young people in the street—and in the role of His Brother, danced by Norman Morrice himself, he struck a very personal note with his twisted, angular leaps. The rest of the characterisation was very flat; some of the mime was desperately laboured; and the ballet as a whole never made anything like its proper impact because of the choice of gentle, romantic music by Dohnanyi that was fantastically inappropriate to the theme. All the same, this ballet showed Norman Morrice to have learned a little about construction and dance-imagery from Tudor's ballet *Jardin aux Lilas*, and the role he created for himself showed a promise of future expressiveness.

*Hazana* (1959) was much less successful. Norman Morrice was able to ensure the use of suitable music by Carlos Surinach, but he chose a theme (involving the dragging a cross up a church) which was very unsuited to choreography—at least to the sort of choreography that lay within his command. Here all the characters were dummies, and the treatment exaggerated the melodramatic sentimentality which had been present in *Two Brothers*. The most disquieting feature of *Hazana* was that Norman Morrice showed no real understanding of the nature of dance-imagery: there were long scenes of melodramatic mime, and passages in which dancers executed a few classical steps or poses, but it was obvious that Morrice had not really understood how to create new and expressive dance-images making use of the full resources of dance-technique. Of development out of the twisted leaps of *Two Brothers* there was none at all; in fact there was nothing comparable to his role in that ballet.

*A Place in the Desert* showed very much the same defects as *Hazana*. The theme was again very unsuited to choreography, and this time Norman Morrice crippled himself by setting his ballet in the Middle East, thus forcing himself to work in a semi-Oriental style quite outside his experience or understanding. The characterisation was even more flat and unconvincing than in the previous ballets: as a Company Agent he wandered about in a vague and ineffectual manner, allowing himself to be beaten up at intervals, and the various villagers showed almost nothing but crude hostility. From the point of view of construction the ballet was very confusing, the same scenes of violence being repeated interminably, and the ending seeming to

have little connection with what went before. These faults in construction were no doubt partly due to Norman Morrice's efforts to fit a story to the music; he had obviously taken a great deal of trouble, but at times he was defeated—as when he built up to a climax of violence, and the music remained quiet.

Gillian Martlew did wonders with the rather unrewarding part of the daughter, in love with the company agent; she performed the odd pseudo-oriental evolutions given her by the choreographer with her characteristic exquisiteness of line, and looked very beautiful in a white sari contrasting with her brown skin. But there were times when even this great artist was defeated by the ineffable naïveté of the choreography—such as the moment when she and Norman Morrice made the Indian mudra for a horned animal (deer or cow) at each other.

The programme note placed the action in the Middle East, but Ralph Koltai had the good idea of placing it in North India (where costumes are more stimulating); his very ingenious adaptations of dhotis and saris made free movement possible. In fact nearly all the costumes were good; the setting, unfortunately, was not up to the standard he had achieved in other ballets; the suggestion of a dam, projected on the backcloth, was drab and curiously unconvincing.

## GISELLE

The most striking feature of the revival of *Giselle* (shown in London after a two-year gap) was the marked difference in quality between Act I and Act II. As a production the Rambert *Giselle* has many virtues: it is simple, direct, unpretentious, firmly set in its period and it tells the story clearly; what is more, it suits the talents of the company almost as well as *La Sylphide*. But the staging of Act I on 28th July showed signs of hasty rehearsal, with the movements of a minority of dancers failing to co-ordinate at times with those of the majority. Lucette Aldous was as precise and neat as ever, and in her acting showed an iron determination to bring out every detail demanded of her by the producer. Her concentration was awe-inspiring: when a piece of sticking plaster became attached to her shoe and prevented her from going on point, she showed not the slightest evidence of uneasiness in her arm movements or facial expression. But her performance was something learned and coned by rote rather than felt from within. As for the mimed scenes involving the main characters, these moved somewhat stickily at times, as if the dancers were waiting for the music to give them their cues.

Things were very much better in Act II. Here every Wili was in her place, sure of what to do next, and there were two admirable performances from the leading Wilis, June Sandbrook and Shirley Dixon—though the latter was slightly too staccato. Lucette Aldous looked remote and immaterial, with a strange, set facial expression that created a romantic atmosphere, in spite of its monotony; for a dramatic performance, bringing out the conflict within Giselle between her love for Albrecht and the commands of the



Queen of the Wilis, which she must obey, the dim lighting would have been irritatingly inadequate, but it was well suited to this lyrical and limited interpretation by Lucette Aldous.

Kenneth Bannerman's miming in Act I was too wooden, but he came into his own in the dancing of Act II, when he gave a powerful impression of exhaustion.

The best thing in the whole production was June Sandbrook's performance in the "Peasant" pas de deux. This lacked the brilliance which the best of the Royal Ballet's senior soloists achieve, but it made its own quiet and gentle impact with considerable charm; and in style it was as perfectly in period as her Sylphide.

#### WINTER NIGHT

*Winter Night* (revived by the Rambert on 31st July) has many claims to be Walter Gore's best ballet, in spite of its weaknesses. It is a curious mixture of an abstract symphonic ballet—with the corps de ballet dancers moving through decorative patterns inspired by a Rachmaninov concerto—and a dramatic presentation of a love-triangle, of the type which has obsessed Walter Gore for years. The two elements in the ballet have very little to do with each other: in general the three principals tend to take a pose while the corps de ballet execute their patterns, and then the corps de ballet provide a neutral frame within which the principals enact their drama. The Rachmaninov music suits very well Walter Gore's romantic ideas and his neo-classical style, and he is able to project his triangle theme with more feeling and intensity than in his other ballets with the same theme.

Though one was disappointed not to see Paula Hinton, it was soon clear that Walter Gore had produced Gillian Martlew and June Sandbrook very well in the two principal female roles, and the corps de ballet brought to their dancing the sincerity and simplicity which are characteristic of the Rambert tradition. Gillian Martlew—in a dark costume, with a snood arranged to make her hair look black—gave a fine, sultry impression of a heart-broken woman, whereas June Sandbrook (in white) brought out well the gaiety and charm of the incoming lover. Both artists did wonders in glossing over the repetitiveness of the choreography: in fact there is no real dramatic development after the dark woman has been discarded, and repetitions which made sense musically were not fully acceptable choreographically. (This is always an insoluble problem in symphonic ballets.) John Chesworth made little impact as the man: this was not entirely his fault—for the role is only very slightly characterised—but one might reasonably

have expected more flexible acting from him.

*Winter Night* wears well, in spite of its weaknesses, and it was an excellent idea to bring it back to the repertoire. One small change would make a big difference to its impact: something should be done about the bodices of the corps de ballet girls, which make them look as if they are dancing in their underwear.

#### TUDOR PROGRAMME

The audience which attends the all-Tudor programme each year is a most unusual one. There is a high proportion of professionals—dancers, teachers, choreographers. There are many people who rarely go to ballet, but never miss a Tudor programme because they find in it something almost unique today: contemporary ballet which can stand comparison with the major achievements in other arts, such as the sculpture of Henry Moore and the poetry of T. S. Eliot. The theatre is almost full, and there is a good deal of nostalgic excitement in the air. Notwithstanding all the expertise, the audience is a warm one, capable of great enthusiasm and very quick to react to any particular felicities of execution—such as when Gillian Martlew executes a step (in *Judgment of Paris*) with diabolically precise ineptness, and arouses a sudden burst of applause, as a bull-fighter does with a brilliant pass.

Such an audience of aficionados can be terrifying to a dancer, but they offer no terrors to Gillian Martlew—who performs major roles in all the Tudor ballets, and reaches a different sort of perfection in each. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of her achievement, for these ballets (above all *Jardin aux Lilas* and *Dark Elegies*) demand very rare qualities of imagination, emotional depth, musicality and line in the dancer; unless the movements are performed with all the intricate expressive nuances of line and phrasing intended by the choreographer, they mean nothing at all—and these nuances very easily get lost when the roles are passed from dancer to dancer in the absence of the choreographer. The fact that Gillian Martlew reproduces the roles in all their original purity and complexity puts her in a class by herself among the ballerinas of today; unquestionably there are other great dancers who could do this, given the chance—and what would not some of them give to have this chance! But at present it is Gillian Martlew on whom this great responsibility has fallen; and fortunately she has all the necessary qualities.

On 27th July Gillian Martlew's achievement in the Second Song of *Dark Elegies* was even more moving and incredible than

last year. Though she had a little help from Tudor himself in working up her role in *Jardin aux Lilas*, she had none at all in *Dark Elegies*; to make things even more difficult, no satisfactory tradition of interpretation has ever been established for the solo woman's part in the Second Song, even in English companies directed by Tudor. Yet Gillian Martlew performed the role with all the poetry, classical restraint, simplicity and intense tragic feeling characteristic of this great ballet—establishing the role for the first time as one comparable in expressiveness with the other two female solo roles. Being in a sense new, the Second Song as performed by Martlew brought back exactly the feeling of awe and excitement created by the very first performance of the ballet on 19th February, 1937.

In contrast to Martlew, Anna Truscott had every reason to feel nervous in tackling "An Episode in his Past" (in *Jardin aux Lilas*) for the first time before an expert London audience. But she did very well, projecting just the right unromantic mood of desperation. Unconsciously following the intentions of Tudor, she made the discarded mistress rather hard: sophisticated and very much a woman of the world, she is desperate because she is losing something that matters very much to her—but romantic love is not in question. This Tudorian interpretation caused the role to stand out very boldly (and quite rightly) from the romantic and love-lorn Caroline.

She showed a good feeling for the special quality of line of this ballet, but failed at times to link the steps together with the right fluidity. This was not her fault—the violinist (Penelope Howard) played much too fast: on 2nd August, helped by more suitable tempi, Anna Truscott did much better.

Contretemps of this nature are almost inevitable if the great Tudor ballets are kept for the London season and almost entirely excluded from the programmes shown on tour in the Provinces. The dancers need desperately the chance of maturing in the roles by performing them regularly throughout the year: this would help them enormously—not only in these roles, but also in their general artistic development. It is no less important that Provincial audiences should have the chance of seeing the great Tudor ballets, now firmly established as modern classics. Admittedly it is much easier to fill Provincial theatres with *Coppelia*; but in the long run a steady diet of *Coppelia* (and its equivalent) is death to audiences, to dancers and to the art of ballet. Contemporary trends in the cinema are instructive in this connection; all over the country the big cinemas putting on the standard Hollywood product now tend to lose money, after years of affluence, whereas the smaller specialized cinemas putting on films which can claim to be works of art are attracting good audiences and making money. Much determination, imaginative publicity (and no doubt more money from the Arts Council) would be needed to establish in the Provinces a platform for the great Tudor ballets; but this is vital if the Ballet Rambert is to survive and flourish amid the rapid changes of the sixties. Being unique among British companies in presenting the balletic equivalent of Henry Moore and T. S. Eliot, it has the obvious and vital task of maintaining the Tudor ballets as part of a balanced repertoire throughout the year—and no cause can make a better claim for Arts Council support.

**WALTER GORE**—Continued from page 5  
Franca's National Ballet of Canada), and Harry Haythorne as ballet master and character dancer.

There is an orchestra of nine, plus three which they engage locally, and conductor Michael Pilkington. Orchestrations for *Sylphides* have been made for them by Leighton Lucas, and for *Giselle* by Dudley Simpson from the Royal Ballet (husband of Jill Bathurst).

Although the Company is named *London Ballet*, Walter Gore has no plans yet for bringing them to the metropolis, but it is a curious fact that we are either glutted with ballet in London or there is a dearth of it. So here's hoping that this gallant band will establish itself during this first tour and finally decide to come to London to enliven us during many a dull day. E.H.

#### JEROME ROBBINS

—Continued from page 8  
ebullience as two years ago. John Jones dominated every scene in which he appeared by his virile grace of movement and impeccable line, combining relaxation and power in a way that made one think of him as a black panther—a purely classical panther. He had already (in *Interplay* and *Afternoon of Faun*) established a polished mastery of the classical style in whose evolution dancers of his race had played no part; as one might expect he looked no less assured and superb in jazz dancing, which has been more influenced by the dancing of the North American negroes than by anything else. FERNAU HALL

**NEXT MONTH: A day with Anton Dolin in his villa at Monte Carlo**



# FILMS

## BLACK TIGHTS

**T**HIS film, produced in France by Joseph Kaufman, brings together four ballets by Roland Petit, with a linking commentary by Maurice Chevalier. Shot in Technicolor and "Super Technirama 70", and projected on a wide screen with stereophonic sound, the scenes of dancing make a remarkably vivid effect. One misses the impact of the living presence of the artists, but one gains by being brought very close and seeing much of the dancing more clearly than a spectator in even the best seat in a theatre.

By far the most impressive of the four ballets is *Carmen*. This is shown almost at full length, and Zizi Jeanmaire gives a superb performance of her finest role, offering as it does good scope to her special qualities as an artist. She is particularly good in the bedroom scene, gradually growing in animation in her solo and then building up to a fine erotic climax in the pas de deux; just as in her stage appearances in this ballet, she performs every movement with such purity of line and such intensity of characterisation (making *Carmen* irresistibly seductive and destructive, and at the same time curiously innocent) that she makes the most daring poses acceptable to anyone: quite rightly, the film has been given a "U" certificate.

Next to Zizi's performance the finest things in this film version of *Carmen* are the decor and costumes of Clave, which come off beautifully; the colours are authentic, the lighting imaginative, and the modifications in the scenery (intended to adapt it to a large sound stage) intelligently done. Henning Kronstam makes an admirable Toreador, swaggering around among his admirers. Roland Petit himself suffers from the effect of the camera, which enormously magnifies both the good and bad qualities of any role and any performance: his Don José is at times slightly embarrassing (above all in the ludicrous Habañera solo) and his rather tense facial expression suffers from too much repetition—much the same expression having been visible for a long time in the two previous ballets.

The camera-work and editing are on the whole competent, though from time to time feet are cut off, and in the bedroom scene there is one very bad jump cut—from a shot with the two figures centre screen to another in which they are just coming up into the bottom of the frame.

Unfortunately this exciting ballet comes at the end of a long film, by which time the eye is tired with poor choreography, in some of Petit's more forgettable ballets: blown up to the size of a wide screen, their defects are desperately obvious. Zizi looks attractive in black tights and black bodice in *La Croqueuse de Diamants* (The Diamond Cruncher), but cannot overcome the dreariness of the action, with its clumsy attempts at humour. *Cyrano de Bergerac* is intolerably pretentious, notwithstanding large cuts and Moira Shearer's slender and appealing charm. *Deuil en 24 Heures* (A



Moira Shearer returns to the screen in the *Cyrano de Bergerac* sequence of Joseph Kaufman's *Black Tights*

Photo by courtesy of British Lion

Merry Mourning) has more attractive scenes than either of the preceding ballets, but suffers from the very curious casting of Cyd Charisse in the principal role: she can make a good impression in Hollywood musicals, but her whole approach is too obvious and solid for this frothy French farce.

The idea of making a film out of Petit's ballets was an excellent one: if the producer had selected his best works and cast in them the ballerinas who inspired them (presenting *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit* with Margot Fonteyn and *Le Loup* with Violette Verdy alongside *Carmen* with Zizi Jeanmaire) the result would have been an unforgettable film.

## OTHELLO

**O**NE must respect a Georgian choreographer like Chabukiani for seeking to give ballet in Georgia a high artistic stature by producing a balletic version of a great tragedy by Shakespeare: if he had succeeded in what he set out to do, he would have created something of the

highest international importance—and certainly the subject-matter of Shakespeare's *Othello* is likely to appeal strongly to the dancers of a country which is as much a bridge between East and West as Venice in its hey-day.

A few tiny details of the film suggest what Georgians might do with this theme, under ideal conditions: at his first appearance the foot movements of the lean and sinister Iago (Zurab Kikaleishvili), in soft Georgian boots, made an oblique and intriguing reference to Georgian male dancing; the beginning of a mass dance of celebration of Othello's triumph, with groups hurrying wildly in a night lit by torches and bonfires, is quite impressive, though the dance itself never takes flight. The choreographer has followed the Shakespeare plot with extreme care, making only a few minor changes (such as adding a ball at Othello's Cyprus castle, and transforming Bianca into a sort of gypsy dancer). But the end-product is a desperate travesty of Shakespeare which is often almost unbelievably "ham". Some idea of its quality is given by what

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## MASQUE BALLET CLUB

THE work of leading amateur dramatic groups (notably the Questors, Tavistock and Unity) has shown that amateurs can challenge comparison with professionals by strong artistic direction, long rehearsal, fine production, good casting—and above all by tackling plays so unusual in theme or treatment that the professional stage cannot risk them. Things are much more difficult in the field of amateur ballet, for ballets are not available in printed form, and a good technical level in dancing demands many years of hard work from an early age, as well as daily classes from then on; but on the other hand the standard of enterprise among professional ballet companies is so low that the field is wide open for amateur groups who can cope with these problems in some way or another. The various items presented by the Masque Ballet Club at Morley College on 22nd July were very unequal in the standard they achieved, but the club deserves high credit for its enterprise in planning an extremely varied evening, and above all for choosing ideas capable of drawing a good standard of work out of amateurs: what could be better (at least potentially) than a programme bringing together a production of the oldest surviving ballet, a ballet dealing with the mysterious mediaeval theme of the succuba (a female demon thought to make love with sleeping men), and a satire of avant-garde ballet by a well-known professional choreographer?

By far the best item was the opening ballet, *The Whims of Cupid and the Maître de Ballet*. This Galeotti ballet of 1786, still surviving in the Royal Danish repertoire, is of extreme historical interest, and also of considerable charm. For many reasons it is ideally suited to an amateur group: there is a strong element of humour, much of the dancing is in character style, and the few classical and demi-caractère items are not impossibly difficult (when suitably simplified) for dancers who have had a sound classical training. (Just

as the leading amateur dramatic and operatic groups invariably have some artists of professional standard who for some reason prefer not to rely on the stage for their living, so a good amateur ballet group can call on the services of a small number of highly trained danseuses.) The production by "Hans Guildenstern" (a pseudonym for A. E. Mason, with help from Bridget Kelly-Espinosa) was a tour de force, reproducing the spirit and style of the original with extraordinary fidelity, while making the necessary adjustments to the capabilities of the artists. One remembers the gormless toothy smile of Gloria Warnes as a Quaker, the long straight legs and quiet charm of Penelope Hinds as an ancient Greek performing pure classical steps, and above all the brio of Pamela Jones in a fast demi-caractère "French" dance. The costumes were remarkably close in spirit to the originals, bringing together specially made outfits and hired ones; the decor was a close copy of a Danish original; and the taped music was admirably arranged for string quartet by Anthony Baines and well played by the Veracini Quartet.

*The Lark Ascending*, by Leo Kersley, was very much as when last performed for the Sunday Ballet Club, and fitted in rather oddly with the rest of the bill.

*The Succuba*, with choreography by Bridget Kelly-Espinosa, had a most unusual and promising theme: if the treatment had really come to grips with the theme, the ballet would have dominated the programme. But the choreographer crippled herself from the start by choosing late-Romantic music by Richard Strauss that was wildly inappropriate for a mediaeval subject: it was particularly disturbing to see an authentic Brueghel bag-piper pretending to play music which could hardly be less like bag-pipe music. It was a very good idea to provide the cast with a strong story: the trouble was that she treated the story in such a way that the ballet fell into a series of clichés, with a priest

striding about with a cross, and a succuba who was lecherous in a very banal manner. The succuba appeared as a witch with a magical doll: in fact a faithful treatment of a succuba (showing her as a dream-figure, one of the strangest aspects of man's psyche in the Middle Ages) would have demanded the presentation of several dimensions of illusion and reality at the same time. The combination of Brueghel figures in mediaeval costumes with figures out of 19th century romantic ballet (in tutus and pointe shoes) made it hard to believe in the story; and the melodramatic ending, with the gentle heroine (disgusted at the success of her rival the succuba) deciding that she too would become a succuba, was impossible to take seriously.

Pamela Jones was excellent as The Bride, fulfilling the promise she had shown in the French dance: she acted sincerely and strongly, and her feet were well pointed. It was chiefly in supported pirouettes that she (and the other female soloists) showed inexperience: the Masque danseuses and their partners did creditably well in other types of double work (notably lifts) but would be well advised to leave the supported pirouette alone until they have worked hard and long at it.

The programme ended with *Catharsis*, in which Andrée Howard had the wonderful idea of taking the mickey out of the phoney avant-gardism of French choreographers like Béjart and Charrat (with some side-swipes at Cranko). Some of the musique concrète (by Geoffrey Wright) caught the right note of cosmic idiocy, but the choreography was almost entirely lacking in the necessary wit and accuracy: unlike Staff's satire on symphonic ballet in *Czernyana*, it was never dead on target, and was mimed rather than danced. The best scene concerned La Diva (acted by Joyce Welch with a nice sense of absurdity): she stuffed material into a wire shape to make a crazy hat, and mimed a rather obvious but effective satire on Schönbergian *Sprechstimme*. F.H.

## HINTLESHAM FESTIVAL

WALTER GORE'S new company—called, for some unexplained reason, the London Ballet—made its debut with two performances at the Hintlesham Festival, in Suffolk, at the end of July. The company is headed by Gore and Paula Hinton, his wife; it includes a number of promising-looking young dancers and it is to tour the provinces and the Continent with a repertory consisting at first mainly of excerpts from the classics and works by Gore himself.

Only a section of the company appeared at Hintlesham, on the small open-air stage in the delightful garden of Hintlesham Hall. (Actually the stage is covered, and so is the audience, but the space in between is open to the skies so that one is liable to watch the performance through the rain, rather like looking at an old, silent film.) The programme consisted of three ballets by Gore—a revival of *Peepshow*, first seen at Ballet Workshop in 1952, *Night and Silence*, and the world première of *Scottish Suite*.

*Peepshow* is a slight but amusing cabaret-like number, of the type one might

find in a Paris night-club or music-hall. It only lasts about ten minutes. Two boys and a girl are seen swimming, floating and flirting in the sea. First the top halves of their bodies are covered so that only their legs are visible, then the covering board descends so that they can be seen from the waist upwards, and finally it vanishes to reveal all. Another ingenious effect is when the dancers burst through grey-blue paper representing the sea. Jane Evans, Ed Nicholls and particularly Harry Haythorne, with his humorous face reminiscent of Keith Beckett, performed with the right dead-pan wit.

*Night and Silence* was danced by Hinton and Gore, who had just given some performances of it at Sadler's Wells during the Rambert season. It inevitably lost some impact in the open-air, and the music (recorded) was played at deafening volume on the crackly loudspeakers.

*Scottish Suite* seemed to have as little to do with Scotland as the London Ballet with London. The music by Malcolm Arnold was mostly taken from his *English Airs and Dances*, used by Kenneth Mac-

Millan for *Solitaire*, though admittedly there were two numbers from the Scottish *Airs and Dances*. As the dancers in balletic evening-dress with tartan sashes waltzed around, I found myself visualising the wittier and more original dances devised by MacMillan. It is surely a bad mistake to make a new ballet to music which is already in use in the current repertoire. The dancers, led by Paula Hinton and Roger Tully, looked elegant and overcame the difficulties posed by the small stage.

No doubt this new company will be appearing in places which would not otherwise have ballet and presumably its programmes will be more substantial than the one given at Hintlesham. Walter Gore will have a showplace for his choreography and an opportunity for new creations. I suppose that all this should arouse one's instinctive enthusiasm. But I hope I will not be thought too churlish if I express my personal view that what we want now is not so much more ballet as better ballet, or perhaps I should say even better ballet.

OLEG KERENSKY



# FESTIVAL BALLET SEASON

## DIANNE RICHARDS IN THE SNOW MAIDEN

ON 29th July the Festival Ballet's *Snow Maiden* was to be seen with a third change of cast, Diane Richards taking the title role and Paul Comelin that of Mizgir.

Diane Richards did very well, in a part which obviously suited her; in fact she danced much better than ever before, showing none of the extreme nervousness which up to now has damaged all her attempts at major roles. It was touching to see how she made herself believe in every detail of the part—even those details which are slightly embarrassing, such as the Snow Maiden's obsession for making kittenish jumps which land her in a curled-up position in the arms of her partner. In many ways hers was the best Snow Maiden of the first three casts: she combined sweetness and naïveté with a curious, slightly grotesque quality that set her apart and made her convincing as a creature living on a different plane from the human beings.

Paul Comelin partnered her competently, but his Mizgir was rather too delicate for a Russian peasant: at times his facial expressions had something of the sentimentality which 19th century painters tended to give to those of Christ. He might well have looked better with a different shape of beard.

William Perrie showed a warm attractive personality in the role of Leil. It was obvious that he did not understand how to build up a Slavonic folk-tale character nearly as well as Jelko Yuresha (who has had considerable experience in this field in Yugoslavia), but within its limitations his interpretation of the role was so good that it made one want to see more of him in future.

## SWAN LAKE (ACT II)

AS WELL as creating *The Snow Maiden* for the Festival Ballet, Vladimir Bourmeister staged a version of Act II of *Swan Lake* which differed in certain minor details from previous versions, staged by him for the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre in Moscow and the Paris Opéra.

Basically his Festival Ballet version was much closer to Konstantin Sergeyev's version for the Kirov than to Nicolas Sergueyev's versions for the Vic-Wells

Ballet and the International Ballet. There were no huntsmen and no Benno, and the conventional mime by which Odette reveals her nature to Siegfried was cut out (leaving just the same regrettable hiatus as in the Kirov production). When the swans collected on the stage to be confronted by Siegfried, they arranged themselves in a long diagonal line, bending off to stage-left when it reached down-stage centre instead of merging into the familiar tight group. Bourmeister's version was novel chiefly at the beginning, where the scene in which Siegfried encountered Odette was built up in somewhat the same manner as the encounter between the Tsarevich and the Firebird: Siegfried and Odette circled each other warily for some time, until at last he managed to pin her down. At the end Bourmeister used no magician at all—in violent contrast to the Maryinsky tradition (faithfully followed by Konstantin Sergeyev) which makes a good deal of the owl-magician, even having a bird-owl swoop down through the air before the man-owl appears. (Nicholas Sergueyev longed to revive this for his International Ballet version, and greatly regretted that the company would not organize it for him.)

The most interesting of Bourmeister's innovations was a pas de trois for three leading swans. This had some interesting patterns, and made a slightly novel effect because the dance was done almost entirely in unison—though it was spoiled from time to time by ugly runs on half point ending in a *pointe tendue*. It was well danced by Janet Kedge, Sheila Melvin and Anna Wooster. The corps de ballet girls, in contrast, looked much too solid, heavy and matter-of-fact to be convincing as romantic swan-maidens: the contrast with the greyhound elegance and lyricism of the Kirov-danseuses was very marked.

Marilyn Burr, dancing the Swan Queen on 4th August, was very obviously miscast. This is the most romantic, lyrical, tragic and mysterious of all the great classic roles, and is at the opposite pole from her natural qualities.

It was a pleasure, after the unfortunate settings of *The Snow Maiden*, to see Edward Delaney's sombre, lowering setting making good use of the Festival Hall stage. But something went badly wrong with the lighting early in the act, for Siegfried disappeared entirely when he was outside the area covered by the spot following Odette.

## OTHELLO—Continued from page 11

Chabukiani wears as Othello: most of the time this noble Moor, the greatest general of Venice at the height of Venice's magnificence, goes around almost nude, wearing bathing trunks and some white drapery. Chabukiani's choreography is on a par with this costume: at the climax of the action, when Iago is driving Othello on to strangle Desdemona, Othello does a pirouette and then points one arm; Iago does the same, ending up pointing with him. Then Othello repeats his pirouette and arm-pointing, and so does Iago. When Othello has strangled Desdemona, he goes centre-stage to perform some more pirouettes.

Some of the action is unconsciously funny, such as when Othello, attempting to suggest one of the great speeches, works his mouth and makes the same sort of gestures as an opera singer, so that one expects him at any moment to break into an aria.

The settings (for which Virsaladze, designer both for the Kirov and the Georgian Folk Dance Group, is partly responsible) have a certain plushy, semi-Oriental impressiveness which probably comes off better on stage than on film, and an air of exoticism and mystery is created by the lighting, which shows the dancers nearly always against a black background. But the colours (perhaps because of the dim lighting) are not as strong as the theme demands, and the eye eventually tires of the Stygian blackness. The music, by Alexei Matchavarani, is totally inadequate to its mighty theme; even at its best it sounds like a feeble pastiche of Khachaturian's Sabre Dance, and often it is like palm court music: the ending, with Desdemona dead and Othello dying, gets all mixed up with the palm court, for the orchestra reacts to the situation with gentle tinkles on the harp and a sentimental cello melody.

## THE WITCH BOY

IT WAS almost impossible to recognise the corps de ballet danseuses in *The Witch Boy* (which came next in the programme) as the same as those who appeared in *Swan Lake*. They danced with fire and remarkable feeling for place and period, looking completely at home in their Wild West costumes; and the men were equally convincing. In fact the whole performance was brilliant—on average better than ever before, so that one would swear it was specially polished up for the occasion by the choreographer (Jack Carter), though this was not the case.

Diane Richards confirmed the very good impression she had made in *The Snow Maiden*, dancing Barbara Allen with assurance, ease and maturity. Her acting, supported by her strong technique, was vivid, and she projected a slightly sinister allure from the beginning; when she looked at the Witch Boy, her eyes seemed to bore into him. (Clearly what she needs, to do justice to her talents, is a strong dramatic role in which she can lose herself.)

Almost inevitably, Ronald Emblem could not efface the memory of John Gilpin's Witch Boy (with its disturbing and inhumanly perfect line), but he did very well indeed, having added considerable depth and technical polish to his interpretation. He was particularly good in pouring into the semi-classical enchainements the right feeling of wickedness and ungovernable sinister vitality.

Deirdre O'Conaire showed even more élan and bitter, vengeful animosity than before, making the Store-Keeper dominate the stage as soon as she began to dance. Jean-Pierre Alban had just the right horrible stillness in his acting of the blind Conjurer Man, looking admirably haggard in his Kabuki-like make-up and great mane of a wig. (Jack Carter was almost certainly influenced by Kabuki when he choreographed this role.)

It is very important that in *The Witch Boy* the Festival Ballet has a production in which every detail—from the wigs to the lighting plot—is exactly right, so that together they add up to a production in which the company can challenge comparison with what any other company achieves in a comparable work. In fact *The Witch Boy* shows what the company is capable of achieving, under favourable conditions. To recreate such favourable conditions is far from easy, as the whole history of ballet proves; but the artistic future of the company will depend on how far it succeeds in doing this.

## BOURRÉE FANTASQUE

ON 4th August this ballet was distinguished (as last year) by a stunning performance by Deirdre O'Conaire in the first section (which gives its title to the whole ballet). According to the programme, this section is "an ironic commentary on ballet elegance", and this is exactly what this great artist made of it. With her long legs and exquisite line she gave the utmost elegance to the enchainements which she performed "straight", and then stood this elegance on its head with a crazy wit that in its own way was also supremely elegant. Some of her clowning was quite different from what she did last year—but it was equally funny: clearly this is a role which depends a lot on the mood of the performer at the time. F.H.



# IRINA KOLPAKOVA

THE decoration of the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad, we are told, is white, pale blue and gold. A more appropriate colour scheme could scarcely be imagined to set off the ballerinas of the Kirov Ballet, with their preponderance of white skins, blue eyes and golden hair, their slight aristocratic build and small neat heads. To audiences acclimatized to the Bolshoi girls, dark, passionate and glowing, with their electric backs and arms, superbly

proud dominant carriage and dynamic gifts of projection, the elegant, cool and pure style of the senior company came as a shock and a revelation. Here, with few exceptions, we saw no trace of the arched shoulders, sinuous arms and vivid dramatic movement which we have grown to expect from Soviet dancers. These dancers are withdrawn and serene: they appear to dance for one another and hardly ever break through the proscenium arch to take

the audience by assault—the male dancers of *Taras Bulba* proving an obvious exception. Their technique is classically perfect, their aim is faultlessness to the point where if a dancer is performing a rôle for the first time (as did Sizova with *Aurora*) and feels herself occasionally suffering from a slight difficulty in execution owing to lack of experience, she is unable to bluff, or to cover up any minor accident. These girls are untheatrical—in the best sense of the word: they set their own standards and nothing else is important to them.

Perhaps the most outstanding of all in this respect is Irina Kolpakova, a slight blonde at whom one would not turn to look in the street (were it not for her beautiful walk) but who can create on the stage the impression of being the prettiest thing in the world. During the four weeks of the recent season at Covent Garden she has danced *Aurora*, *Giselle* and *Katerina* and perhaps made the most striking impression in the suite from *The Nutcracker* in which it is almost true to say she did not dance, she floated across the stage.

Knowing that there was a large company left performing in Leningrad, and that—to take an example—the senior ballerina Alla Shelest, who danced *Giselle* to a packed house on the night after the Royal Ballet closed in Leningrad, had not been included in the London contingent, we asked Kolpakova how the company had been selected to visit England and she told us that, so far as she knew, this had been arranged bearing in mind those dancers who had already performed abroad, for example in Japan last year; so that, as all dancers could not go, those who had not yet danced abroad should get their chance this time. We pointed out to her that her *Aurora* was one of the most consistent performances of the rôle we had ever seen, and that it grew in stature as the acts progressed, without any gaps being apparent between dancing and acting. She told us in reply that she had been the last and youngest graduate now in the company of Vaganova, and that she owed her inspiration, her technique and her grasp of a rôle to that teacher. “But” she said “though technique is, of course, very important, what I want to do more than anything else is to make every single movement, every gesture, every breath I take on the stage expressive. I want it all to mean something—it must have content and not be just technique.”

This led us to comment on a purely technical point which had occurred to us while watching performances. All ballerinas performing a series of thirty-two *fouettés* performed them absolutely dead on the same spot, finishing not with the breathless *sous-sus* and wobble to which we have become accustomed in the work of Western dancers, but clean, like a knife, in fourth position. Were *fouettés* taught according to the Vaganova system, and always performed, finishing in fourth? “Oh, no,” she said, “we finish *fouettés* in the way in



Irina Kolpakova as *Aurora* in *The Sleeping Beauty*  
Photo: R. Riabinine

(continued overleaf on page 16)



by  
JANET and LEO KERSLEY

with  
acknowledgments to Nina Hubbard  
who kindly acted as interpreter  
throughout this series of articles ★

## YURI SOLOVIEV

**I**F LONDON *en masse* feted space-traveller Yuri Gagarin, the London ballet audience was no less excited over its own particular hero of the Kirov Ballet's London season: Yuri Soloviev. In fact, after members of the audience heard that he was not due to dance on the closing night, a petition which over 200 of the gallery audience signed was sent to the management. Soloviev danced. After the performance he was mobbed. We feel, from the way in which he turned over and over again, all the way down the street, to wave good-bye, that he is going to miss the London audience—but not as much as we shall miss him.

Soloviev is slight and fair, boyish, somewhat reserved and entirely unopinionated, although he has definite ideas of his own. We asked him how he felt about the affection and appreciation which burst from the audience in all parts of the house on every occasion on which he danced: about the electrifying reaction caused in the theatre by his appearance on the stage. "Do people behave like this in Lenin-grad?" we asked him. He laughed. "Of course, it is not easy for anyone like me to have such a success at home" he told us, "in Russia we have so many wonderful male dancers for so many years that it is not so easy for a young dancer to be accepted immediately. But yes, we do have people waiting at the stage door, for autographs."

We enquired how it was that the stars of the Kirov company seemed, in comparison with the Bolshoi, mostly to be very young. "That is chance" he replied "for many of the older Kirov dancers retired just recently. So the average age of our company is a low one. We are mostly young dancers."

We asked Soloviev how it had come about that he was a dancer. Although he does not remember it, he has since been told by his father that at the age of seven he asked his mother if he might learn ballet. There is no theatrical background in his family at all: his mother loved ballet but danced only as an amateur. At seven Soloviev began to take three ballet classes a week with a private teacher, and when he was nine years old this teacher suggested to his family that he should be entered for the Kirov Ballet School. He was immediately accepted, and danced his first professional role with the professional company while still a student of the School (a very rare occurrence) when just 17. It was the pas de trois in Act 1 of *Swan Lake*. He has been a full member of the company for four years.

We then asked Soloviev whether he preferred to dance a full evening's role such as that of the Prince in *Swan Lake* or Danila in *The Stone Flower*, or whether he enjoyed more to come on and dance a pas de deux into which he could put every ounce of effort in a short while. He told us that he preferred a full-length role every time, for he is interested in the creation of consistent character through movement. He was particularly interesting



Yuri Soloviev in *The Stone Flower*

Photo taken in London by Ian James

★ Our September issue contained an interview with Konstantin Sergeyev.



continued from page 15

about the *Blue Bird* pas de deux. We asked him about his interpretation of this, for he does not treat it as a technical show-piece in which to display batterie, elevation and pirouettes, but in a manner entirely different from that to which London audiences are accustomed. "But it is not a show-piece" he replied. "The *Blue Bird* is a Prince who has turned himself into a bird in order to see the Princess, and when he dances with her he is singing to her and she listens to his song." Bearing this in mind, we found it particularly interesting to watch the pas de deux on the closing night of the season, for this is how this most famous of all classical pas de deux is most clearly interpreted when danced by the Kirov dancers. Riabouchinska gave a hint of it in pre-war days with the de Basil ballet, but even in that case it was not clear from the movements of her hands (now lost in English productions) whether she was listening, or singing herself: Moiseyeva was clearly listening, and who—observing the unsurpassed cantilena of Soloviev's dancing, with its pure legato style, could wonder?

Apropos *Blue Bird*, we asked Soloviev whether the solo was always cut, and explained that in England we were accustomed to a longer variation—in particular we regretted not seeing him perform the ailes de pigeon, most difficult of all and now rarely performed. But he looked surprised and told us that at the Kirov it was always done as he did it, or at any rate for as long as he can remember (which admittedly is not very long).

We asked Soloviev whether he found it a great physical strain, as would nearly all English trained dancers, to perform on one evening in the pure classical style of Petipa, the next night in the heavy character work of *Taras Bulba*. Mrs. Hubbard, who was interpreting for us, turned to give his answer with a smile. "I knew he was going to say this!" she interpolated and then told us "He says 'But *Taras Bulba*' is so easy!"

We asked him whether he found the change of diet, and English food, affected his dancing and told him that it was the custom of Leonide Massine, when touring in America, to travel in his own caravan and cook his own meals so that he should be certain of a balanced diet and no sudden changes. Soloviev told us, to our sorrow—but not altogether surprise—that he found English food dull, or rather not very interesting. "I like lots of different kinds of soups, and that you do not have; and the other food, it is rather stodgy with not enough spices and flavourings. But I am getting used to it—and I do not think it affects my dancing in any way."

This point apart, Soloviev enjoyed being in London very much and hopes to come back: he was very sorry that we had not had the opportunity of seeing the Shostakowitch ballet, and paid a hearty compliment to the London orchestra. He was also delighted to be told that a London critic had described him as "space-traveller and hero" of the London audience; nobody had thought to show him the cutting.

which the choreographer requires of us. Sometimes in fourth, sometimes in other positions. But the aim of all our work is to make our dancing clean and correctly finished."

Kolpakova was particularly disappointed that London had been denied the chance, through no fault of the direction, to see some of the ballets in the repertoire announced for the season, and particularly the Shostakowitch one-acter. The leading rôle in this was made for her by the choreographer, Belsky, and she was very sorry not to have had the chance to dance it for London audiences. *Giselle* and *The Sleeping Beauty* are wonderful ballets," she said, "but some of the dancers feel they are old and dead. I love to dance them, but I really prefer something new." This of course explains her superlative performance in *The Stone Flower*, as her attitude towards expression in movement explains the consistency in her Aurora; she does not stop dancing and begin acting and vice versa, but tries throughout to intermingle the two so that it is impossible to dissociate the acting from the dancing.

We next enquired about the interesting fact that so many dancers stayed on in the theatre when their dancing days are over. "All the time we are dancing in the company" she told us "we study other things

as well, so that when time comes for us to retire we are ready to do other things. Of course, many stay on and dance mime or character rôles. Many go into other branches of the arts, or stay on as dressers or in some other technical branch of the theatre, if they do not want to teach. And of course many become writers and critics." She was astounded to hear the fact—which we could not refrain from mentioning—that only two or three of London's ballet critics had ever danced.

We asked Kolpakova whether there was any special rôle which she had not yet been given which she would like to dance, or what her particular ambition was for the future. After a moment's pause for thought, she replied: "I love to dance new parts in new ballets, but I have no particular thing that I want to do, except that, above everything else, I want to dance very, very much better." Here Simon Versaladze, principal designer and artist responsible for the magical sets and costumes of *Sleeping Beauty*, who had been listening to our conversation, gave a hearty laugh. "Miss Kolpakova is altogether too modest!" he commented. Remembering the way in which the ballerina sailed through the air in *The Nutcracker* one could not but agree with him.

## SCOTTISH NOTES

by D. K. CAMERON

### Big Edinburgh Welcome for London Ballet

WALTER GORE's new London Ballet got an enthusiastic reception from Edinburgh ballet-goers on the opening night (14th August) of its week of programmes at the Royal Lyceum Theatre. This may have had something to do with the dearth of real ballet at the imminent International Festival; they were "gathering ye rosebuds"—and seemed, at the end, well satisfied with what they had gathered.

On this night *Les Sylphides* opened a programme of four ballets the remainder of which were, all three, Walter Gore's own creations. The audience could hardly have been otherwise than well-disposed towards the company after the clean-cut, flowing performance of the Fokine classic which it was given. In particular the dancing of Paula Hinton and guest artiste Alexis Rassiné, individually in the mazurkas and together in the *pas de deux*, was benison to the lover of classical line and expression.

The next ballet to be presented turned out (in my view at least) to be the highlight of the evening—and this because of a mischance. *Eaters of Darkness*, created by Gore for the Frankfurt-am-Main Opera House in 1957 is, as readers will know, choreographed to music by Benjamin Britten. Unfortunately, this is scored for a 32-piece orchestra, whereas the London Ballet runs only to a 12-piece one at present. The solution, gamely tackled, was to perform silently. You will remember that the story concerns a woman committed to an asylum for an unscrupulous husband and driven genuinely mad by the murder of a gentle lunatic who tries to protect her from the murderer who desires to ravage her. The effect of the silent performance of this piece, with apparently unimpaired dancing by the company, was electrifying. A pin could have been heard drop. Watching the corps of "lunatics", I was re-

minded of a performance of *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* which I saw once at a film society, with only the slight ticking of the projector breaking a silence made intense by strangeness and horror. The work of Paula Hinton as the woman and Roger Tully and Harry Haythorne as the madmen was deserving of the highest praise.

Mr. Gore himself appeared as a leading character in the corps. He told me that the company kept its beat and timing by following either himself or Paula Hinton. "They had two conductors", he joked, "so they couldn't possibly go wrong". Naturally, he was greatly pleased by the success of this virtue made out of necessity.

*Peepshow*, which followed, is an amusing little oddity, in which Gore has considerable fun with three bathers—two men and a girl. The music for this is by Jean Francaix, and the choreographer himself designed the bright and ingenious setting (what an all-rounder the man is!).

For *The Fair Maid* (music, Bizet: costumes and setting, Andrée Howard) this was the world première. The theme of this ballet is simple. In the mountain village where it takes place it is the custom when a boy and girl become engaged to perform a ritual engagement and wedding dance. The cast consists of the boy and girl (on this occasion Jill Bathurst and Simon Mottram), the bridesmaids-to-be and the best-men-to-be. The piece gives opportunities for various lively and well-performed set-pieces (the corps at one point does some interesting patternwork with a rope of flowers) and was very well received by the Edinburgh audience. In fact, I lost count of the curtain-calls.

The company's manager is Dennis Coomber, whom I last met when he was

Continued on page 18



## OUR CRITICS :

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| London ...        | Fernau Hall          |
| Paris ...         | Ferdinand Reyna      |
| New York ...      | Hope Sheridan        |
| Moscow ...        | Nina Karasyova       |
| Amsterdam ...     | Ine Rietstap         |
| Venice ...        | Robert Paterson      |
| Auckland ...      | Keith Woods          |
| Tokyo ...         | C. A. Eland          |
| San Francisco ... | Jack Anderson        |
| Brisbane ...      | Paul Moulds          |
| Cape Town ...     | Marina Grut          |
| Monte Carlo ...   | J. R. Farrington     |
| Munich ...        | Ingeborg Zürner      |
| Johannesburg ...  | Mary Kenwood         |
| Belgrade ...      | Milica Zajcev-Daric  |
| Hamburg ...       | Robin Hamilton-Webb  |
| Chicago ...       | Ann Barzel           |
| Cairo ...         | Eric de Nemes        |
| Bonn } ...        | Dr. Wilfried Hofmann |
| Cologne }         |                      |



*Dancers of The "Popular Ballets" Company,  
the Greek Folk Dance and Song Society.*



## Trudy Goth reporting from

### GREECE

THE dying note of the clarinet, the last vigorous leap, gave the signal for a burst of enthusiastic applause. The distinguished gathering which that evening filled the Ancient Theatre of Piraeus, the Greek Royal Family, a President of a newly created Republic and his wife, members of the government, of the diplomatic corps, of Athens society—showed by the number of curtain calls at the end of the show their sincere appreciation of the performance of the "Popular Ballets" (Greek Folk Dance and Song Society) given in honour of the State's guest.

The dancers in their multi-coloured costumes took their last bow, the lights of the auditorium slowly came up and the spot-lights closed their dazzling eyes. In the dressing-rooms behind the scenes, the members of the company shed the brilliantly ornate dresses and reassumed their everyday appearance. Piece by piece the variegated tableau which had so recently whirled around the stage took its place in the immobility of the costume room.

Another performance of the "Popular

Ballets"—and one of rare distinction—had ended. But what struggles and hours of heart-breaking toil and fatigue, what faith and endurance, had been necessary to elevate the "Popular Ballets" to the position of a rival to ancient tragedy! Hitherto on such occasions Greece had always called upon the magnificent tragedies of Sophocles or Euripides in order to honour her official guests. For the first time, ancient tragedy had ceded its place to Greek popular dances and folk songs, which themselves, however, have their roots deep in the fertile earth of tradition.

To date, hundreds of thousands of spectators have witnessed the performances of the "Popular Ballets", both in Greece and abroad. From June to December last year, the company gave 200 consecutive performances at the ancient theatre of Piraeus, attended by 90,700 spectators, of whom 56,000 were foreigners.

In addition, the "Popular Ballets" have given 227 performances in 124 cities of twelve foreign countries which were seen by 300,000 spectators.

Audiences in Istanbul, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, France, the United States, Canada, Cuba, Paris, Western Germany and Bulgaria have seen and enthusiastically acclaimed the Greek dancers and musicians. Apart from all these activities, however, last summer saw a completely new departure for the "Popular Ballets".

All previous efforts by Dora Stratou to obtain sanction for a season of consecutive performances in Athens (either at a closed or open-air theatre) had failed—although not of course because of the type of entertainment to be provided. Perseverance finally prevailed, however, and in June 1960, permission was obtained, to give performances at the ancient theatre of Piraeus, near Passalimani. And an unprecedented success came to reward her for her untiring efforts to present the country's dances and songs to the Greek public. The daily performances continued to September, providing a spectacle of high artistic merit, the beauty, magic and vigour that characterize the popular dances and songs of Greece.



ALTHOUGH the organizers of Spoleto's fourth (and most successful) Festival are intent on creating an old-world-fine-de-siècle-atmosphere all around town by doing away with neon lights and cheap TWA and PAA prints of all too brilliantly coloured exotic landscapes . . . the modern, contemporary world especially in the dance field has held its uncontested, triumphant place in the programme.

It is natural to compare to a certain extent Maurice Béjart with Jerome Robbins, although what holds them perhaps most apart is the strongly literary background and always tormented expression of the one against the merry, prankish and witty lightness of the other. Both have of course a gamut which encompasses the extremes and Béjart's new presentation *Divertissement* shows much of the pure "dancy" merriment and enjoyment of which Robbins is such a masterful example whereas Robbins' latest opus *Events* has much of the apocalyptic atmosphere common to Béjart whose choreography seems much more an invitation to the thought than an invitation to the dance. His preference is for advanced, contemporary music as he was among the first to create ballets to electronic compositions. His *Symphonie pour un homme seul* is remarkably fresh, six years after its creation and has lost none of the dramatic exteriorization of today's anxiety of living. And Robbins' *Events* is a deeper, more significant and mature if far more horror-stricken statement than his past *Age of Anxiety*. With uncompromising starkness the choreographer expresses his view of today's and tomorrow's world: flight into space, conquest of the atom, hate and violence among peoples whose only dissimilarity is a difference in their skin-colouring. This then is Man's fate—individually and collectively. Helped by sparse but effective pieces of scenery and props designed by Ben Shahn it is hard for the audience to disassociate itself with happenings on stage. At the end when separated limbs of Man's body seem to be flying through space, another Man drops down from nowhere, as if chased out of another paradise lost. He still holds in his hand the atomic particles he had developed for his own kind's destruction—like a last Icarus disillusioned by the invincibility of the Universe. . . . Robert Prince's music loud, strident, pungent and penetrating with a jazzy background sustains the mood well—although as a score it is nothing less than distinguished or remarkable.

Robbins has always been eminently successful in Spoleto and criticisms, as for last year's *Moves*, are most unusual in Italy. This time, if possible, audience and critics were even more enthusiastic than before. *Events* was called "the latest link in a stupendously artistic chain" and "an unconditional triumph". To a more objective viewer the great qualities and originality of the work are obvious, but it has to be seen more than once or twice to understand and appreciate whatever complexities and symbolism may have escaped one and most certainly the company needs to dance it for quite some time yet to integrate it in the repertory as much as the other ballets on the programme. As it stands the evening build's extraordinarily well. With *Interplay* (1945) the truly brilliant company presents itself from the most engaging side; the Cage (1951) has lost none of its

impact though one cannot help the slight, nostalgic feeling for Nora Kaye, creator of the central figure, unforgettable for those who ever saw her—in spite of the excellent dancer interpreting the role today. *Moves* (1960) is forever admirable, not only in its choreographic invention but in the discipline of the performers, who without the slightest musical accompaniment, not even sound, succeed completely in relating a "cantabile" of the dance.

As for Béjart, his greatest success in Spoleto was his creation to Stravinsky's *Sacre* (both choreographers—one with preference of electronic music, the other jazzy—have picked as one "pièce de résistance" composer Stravinsky!)—certainly since Diaghilev's days the most exciting choreographic interpretation of the Stravinsky score. Especially in the first part, danced exclusively by the male dancers of the company the significance of contrasting rhythms and undulating melodies has movement-invention on an unusually high and original level. In this work Béjart uses neither true classical ballet, nor free dance, but instinctive gesture, full of internal allusions and ancestral emotive inspiration.

Both companies count absolutely first-rate dancers, each one a soloist in every sense but the integration of their work is such that names are mentioned alphabetically only and each dancer has a nearly equal chance to show his or her accomplishment in their different assignments.

Spoleto and the Festival of the Two Worlds is responsible for giving a possible evaluation of the reciprocal contacts between Béjart and Robbins. The encounter between the tragic, introverted, cerebral anxiety of the choreographer from Marseille and the instinctive, exuberant, colourful world of New York's own product will be one of the stimulating events in the recent history of the dance. They are both equally polemical in their propositions, but both yield to the immutable choreographic law which is the exaltation of gesture and movement.

TRUDY GOTH

PERFORMANCES by local companies seldom draw large audiences in Tokyo but the television organisations do much to arouse interest. Recently NHK, the Japanese equivalent of the BBC, arranged an interesting entertainment with the object of explaining to viewers what ballet is. William McDermott, a Chilean conductor resident in Tokyo for the past year or so, directed the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra in this programme and showed himself to be the most gifted of the orchestral conductors working in Japan at present in the field of ballet. In the first section of the programme the technique of ballet dancing was demonstrated: the second section was a brief historical survey and the third a ballet to Saint Saen's *Carnival of the Animals*, the choreographer of which was Roy Tobias of the New York City Ballet. N.H.K. assembled for the occasion an all star Japanese cast including the leading dancers of nineteen Tokyo ballet schools.

The initial part of this programme was carefully planned to explain the steps of the dance: unfortunately the demonstrations given were poorly executed. The standard of performance greatly improved in the historical section which consisted of nine items starting with a court dance of the period of Louis Quatorze: there followed well known excerpts from *Giselle*, *Coppelia*, *Swan Lake*, *Sylphides*, *Beau Danube*, a Spanish dance and works by contemporary Japanese choreographers. The final item *Mechanism* to music by Ravel was excellently performed by Mieko Nishida and Tomotake Nakamura of the Tokyo Young Ballet Group.

Roy Tobias was clever in choosing *The Carnival of the Animals* as a vehicle for the large variety of talent at his disposal. Saint Saen's gay and witty score is most suitable for visual interpretation and provided Tobias with ample opportunity for amusing character dances by each animal or group of zoological specimens: the choreography was simple, pleasing and appropriate and demonstrated well the basic construction of a ballet.

CYRIL ELAND

### SCOTTISH NOTES—Continued from page 16

in Glasgow with the Ballets do Rio de Janeiro.

Two anecdotes to finish, very briefly. First, about the knowledgeable gentleman behind me who informed his wife, just before the curtain went up on *Sylphides*, that she was going to see "a Danish ballet done in a kind of stylized kilt costume". If you thought that ballet-goers had long ago ceased to confuse Fokine with Taglioni and Bournonville, you are here proved wrong. This incident is a strong argument for reading *Ballet Today* and being really informed. Second, about the elderly gentleman, who, while Gore's lunatics were reaching the peak of their purely visual gibbering in *Eaters of Darkness*, probably finding it all very strange and not at all so soporific as a sedate adagio, remarked to his two lady companions very audibly, "They're all stark raving mad". And so they were. Most convincingly.

Veronica Bruce, well known for her Cygnet Ballet School, has begun, in the

North of Scotland, a venture romantically known as "ballet in the hills". Two performances were given during the summer school which was held at her little theatre at Glennerney Lodge in Morayshire from 10th-22nd July. The first consisted of Spanish dances by Rosarita, and the second of a mixed bill of items by residents at the school.

Jim Hastie, of Scottish National Ballet, who executed a difficult Russian dance at the latter performance told me that S.N.B. itself has as yet no firm plans for its Continental and American tours following the disappointment of its initial tour in the North of England and in the Scottish Cities, which resulted in an overall deficit of £1000.

### Addendum to London Ballet review

Ballets performed during the rest of the Edinburgh week included Act 2 of *Giselle*, the Pas de Trois from *Swan Lake*, and Gore's *Night and Silence*, created by him for the Edinburgh Festival of 1958.





MAURICE BÉJART'S SACRE DU PRINTEMPS





MARY KENWOOD

from

JOHANNESBURG



INGE ZÜRNER

from

MUNICH

**T**HE Johannesburg City Ballet commenced its short season at the Playhouse Theatre on Thursday 10th August.

*Les Sylphides*, which opened the programme, got off to a somewhat shaky start. This, in my opinion, is not a good ballet for a comparatively new company to tackle. It can be an object lesson in the most boring and uninteresting aspects of ballet unless superlatively performed, by which I mean performed, with all the assistance perfect lighting, staging and orchestral accompaniment can achieve, by a company which has had the advantage of working together over a long period, and with soloists of international calibre. Its deceptively simple choreography can then be transformed into an experience of delicate and touching beauty. Alas, how rarely does it happen!

The second ballet, Frank Staff's dramatic *Transfigured Night*, was a very different matter. Excellent performances were given by the four dancers, Primrose Austin, Lynn Fouche, Andre Beaumont and Sven van Zyl, but Primrose Austin was magnificent. Her powerful and sustained study of the neurotic Elder Sister was superbly danced, and bore comparison with Norah Kaye's tour de force, also as the elder sister, in the American ballet *Pillar of Fire*, to the same music by Schonberg. Another exceptionally fine performance was given by Lynn Fouche as the Younger Sister. This young dancer is full of promise, and has an easy technique coupled with perfect physique and much freshness and charm.

The evening concluded with Act III of *The Nutcracker*. Outstanding in this was the Gopak of Brian Bertscher, while once again Lynn Fouche as one of the Mirlitons and Primrose Austin in the Arab Dance were notable. Denise Schultz and Bart Saayman gave excellent performances of the pas de deux and variations. Bert Saayman as the company's leading male dancer is a firstclass partner and artist and has a most pleasing stage personality.

This was the first performance in a theatre of the Johannesburg City Ballet, a season in the open at Zoo Lake having been given in December 1960. In spite of the very real disadvantage of "canned" music and the small stage, this young Company has got off to a most promising start. Now that a permanent home has been acquired (at Trematon Place, Parktown) and with the advantage of the steady day-to-day build up under their own Artistic Director, Gwynne Ashton, we can look forward to the day when Johannesburg's own Company will compare with that of Cape Town's University Ballet Company.

The winner of the competition for a South African girl to join Luisillo's company has now been selected. She is a Cape Town girl, Mavis Becker (dancing under the professional name Marina Lorca). Runners-up were Carol Antil of Durban and Bernice Lloyd of Johannesburg.

MARY KENWOOD

remainder of THE MUNICH BALLET FESTIVAL

left over from last issue

#### Maurice Béjart (12th and 13th June)

He came to Munich with the big company from the Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels, and he brought a programme that contained something for every taste. *Divertimento* is a series of brilliant variations on the different forms of neoclassical and modern ballet, executed with playful indifference. There are never any finishing poses; instead the dancers adjust their shoes, pull up their tights, or simply walk off. The setting is an empty stage where they practise accompanied by drums and a piano. Dolores Laga and Paolo Bortoluzzi do an incredibly difficult technical pas de deux, Tania Bari dances a solo torn between classical and modern style (piano and drums fighting each other). There was an excellent male ensemble and a short version of a traditional ballet class and a comic jazz item for Patrick Belda. A theme of movement was elaborated in variations until the five dancers could no longer remember it. There was a lot of fun in this divertimento, and still more excellent dancing.

*Pulcinella* (Stravinsky, Béjart, B. Daydé) was a bit disappointing in the conventionality of its choreography, largely interspersed with pantomime and gags, and of its, nevertheless pretty, decor and costumes. It was gaily danced and the public enjoyed it. To Webern's "Pieces for Orchestra (op. 10 and 6)" Béjart has composed a beautiful, plastic choreography on his favourite theme, only on a lighter, not quite so oppressing key—a concerto "pour un homme seul". Finally Ravel's *Bolero* caused great excitement. This music has lured many a choreographer into failure. If Béjart has not yet found its definite visual rendering, he has given it a highly acceptable form. The scene is of a strange, haunting intensity, with a girl (Duska Sifnios) in plain practising clothes dancing on a huge, red table, the men sitting around in drowsy lethargy. The whole dance is built up on one fundamental rocking step, gradually working up to more complicated forms following the crescendo of the music to its climax. But somehow one felt that both the playing of the orchestra and the dancing should have been still more intense.

#### The Gala Performance (14th June)

It opened with *Les Sylphides*, to be followed by six pas de deux, beginning with an extract from Killmayer's *Orfeo*—the meeting of Orfeo and Euridice. Seen without the effects of scenery and decorative corps de ballet the lack of invention in Rosen's choreography became still more evident. However, Sonia Arova and Heino Hallhuber danced most beautifully. Then

we saw the Black Swan as it is done in Bourmeister's new production at the Paris Opéra. He has set it to Tchaikovsky music, but to a quite different, inferior, less sparkling piece, and the choreography follows suit. This Odile is such a coquettish, malignant cat, that the poor Prince must be blind, or imbecile, to take her for Odette—or does he betray her deliberately at the Opéra? Josette Amiel has developed the same ridiculous mannerisms as Liane Daydé—obtrusive flirtation with the audience and high développés at the expense of an ugly, twisted back and stiff arms. This exhibition was simply unaesthetic. Flemming Flindt danced his variation with a strong technique, but a lack of polish, and his arms tended to look cramped. Peter Van Dijk brought the balcony scene from his production of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. He has captured the tender lyricism of this scene in a beautifully musical choreography, but he should try to eliminate a few gestures reminiscent of traditional mime passages. In Jacqueline Rayet he has a very tender, very young and shy Juliet, and they danced this love duet with great feeling and graceful fluidity. Erik Bruhn was the great favourite with the public. He has an impeccable technique which allows him to perform any feat with the greatest ease and elegance and a breathtaking precision. He danced Bournonville's *Flower Festival at Genzano* together with Dulce Anaya who is at her best in dainty, light allegro work, and who found a perfect vehicle in this charming, gay pas de deux. Next we saw the *Sylvia* pas de deux, in Balanchine's choreography. Here Sonia Arova danced with great brio and sparkling technique. In her extraordinary long balances she can match Hightower. At her side Winfried Krisch asserted himself as a brilliant technician. Incidentally his variation contained some of the feats of Bruhn's and he mastered them with ease. He still lacks polish, but given careful attention this young dancer should go very far indeed. Rather exhausted by so much technique we were glad to be taken to fairyland by Bryan Ashbridge (who danced with noble elegance) and Beryl Grey in the Aurora pas de deux. Not that it contains no technique, but it is not dazzling. Beryl Grey rather gives it a warm glow and the harmonious, unobtrusive perfection that makes even the hardest balletomane forget to count the number of tours but sit back and enjoy the mere beauty of the art of dancing. It was good to finish the week on this note and we cannot but express the hope that it becomes the leitmotif throughout next year's festival.

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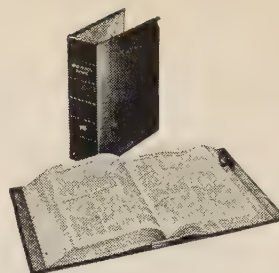
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## STOP PRESS NEWS

ANTON DOLIN and General Administrator George Hall have arranged two more Festivals similar to that held at Coventry in July. Eleven international stars will take part: Anton Dolin, Lyette Darsonval, Claire Sombert, Michel Renault, Janine Charrat, Sonia Arova, Youly Algaroff, Erik Bruhn, Marina Svetlova, Nina Vyrubova and Juan Giulano. Corps de ballet under the direction of Grace Cone. Geoffrey Corbett conducts the orchestra.

w/c 16th October: Hippodrome Golders Green

w/c 23rd October: Streatham Hill Theatre.



# What's NEW

## a shopping guide for balletomanes

TO THE well-known phrase "inside every fat man there is a thin man struggling to get out" I would add that in every balletomane there is a dancer trying to get out.

Well we cannot all become ballerinas, but watching these glorious sylph-like figures one does become only too aware of one's own shortcomings. Dieting is not always easy, and anyway it takes a lot of willpower. Exercises, on one's own, are a bore. Here is a suggestion: why not join one of the 135 local centres of the Women's League of Health and Beauty? Since 1930 the League has built up a membership of 30,000 women and girls of all ages, from all walks of life, and one of the secrets of their success is the fact that the simple exercises which they set to music bring within the reach of all women an experience of movement hitherto reserved for the student of ballet. People join for various reasons. In order to exercise, to lose weight, to make social contacts, to learn to relax mentally and physically. Classes are held usually once a week, sometimes two or three evenings a week, and there are afternoon classes for housewives. And they are cheap. Payment varies from 1/3d. for a 40 minute class to 9d. for 15 minutes. You only pay for the classes you actually attend. Joining the League costs only 7/6d., renewal thereafter 4/6d. A list of the towns where centres exist can be found in the League's Magazine *Health and Beauty*, price 9d. from V. Barter, 12a, London Road, Guildford.

### For Teachers

The League is dependent upon the continued recruitment of new teachers, and for this purpose the Bagot Stack College (at Morley College, London) provides a full-time 2-year course. See announcement this issue.

THOSE who attend ballet regularly will agree that they are members of the best behaved audiences to be found anywhere.

They have to be, because if they arrive late they find the doors closed and will not be permitted to go to their seats until the interval. So that it is a major disaster if you take out your dress for the evening and find that it has a spot or smudge. Now you need not worry, there is a new instant aerosol dry-clean product on the market. The process is simple and safe. A few-seconds burst on the offending stain, and quick-drying powder absorbs it like blotting paper, a light whisk with a clothes brush and powder and stain vanish. And it does not leave a messy smudge or ring, hitherto the hazards of home stain-removers, or damage such fabrics as rayon and artificial silk. Ask for *Aero Dry Clean*, retailing at 5/6d. S.R.

## Recordings

### ROMEO AND JULIET

Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* and Richard Strauss' *Don Juan* have been popular with many choreographers, Ashton, Briansky, Lifar, Skibine, Taras and so on. All have met with success to a varying degree but in the concert hall, the scores never fail to be a draw. Karajan and the V.P.O. are certainly in good form on Decca SXL2269, though stereophonically the recording may not reach the peak that it did in their magnificent recording of *Death and Transfiguration* reviewed in the July issue of *Ballet Today*. However I am sure you will find this disc more than satisfying (mono LXT5629).

### THE WITCH

John Cranko created *The Witch* for the New York City Ballet but unfortunately its première over here, which was to have been on the 12th December 1951 at the Wells, was cancelled. He set it to Ravel's *Second Concerto in G* and the composer's brother objected, saying it had been written for the concert hall, not ballet. A great pity in my opinion, as many more people would have come to enjoy this interesting and amusing work for itself.

Be that as it may, we have both his concertos, the first being for the left hand only, on Columbia SAX2394, with the French pianist Samson François, whose reputation is growing fast, and Cluytens conducting the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra. Both performance and recording are of a very high standard, which won

the well merited Grand Prix du Disque. It can take an honourable place in any collection, though I do not think that François can really compete with Michelangli's exceptional rendering—regrettably only in mono form, HMV. ALP1538—see *Ballet Today*, May 1958. The present disc in mono is 33CX1747.

### ASSEMBLY BALL

How I would like to slip back, a short span, to the days of Andrée Howard's simply conceived ballet, *Assembly Ball*. But what delicious charm it had when the leading roles were taken over by Svetlana Beriosova, David Blair and Stanley Holden! Beriosova had such grace and mystery, and a youthful dignity which intrigued me beyond words, while Blair and Holden gave their particular qualities in no less a measure. It came back so vividly as I listened to Ansermet's performance of Bizet's *Symphony in C*, Decca SXL2275. He has not the vital gaiety of Beecham but his touch is not to be denied. The inclusion of Bizet's *Jeux d'Enfants*, choreographed by Massine, and the suite from *La jolite fille d'Perth* make this an attractive disc (mono LXT5634).

### LE ROSSIGNOL

Massine's ballet, *Le Rossignol*, was created for Diaghilev and set to Stravinsky's *Symphonic Poem, Le Chant du Rossignol*. The score originates from the composer's opera, *Le Rossignol* which was not a success due to the years that lapsed between the composing of the first and second acts, with the resultant fantastic change in style. Both opera and ballet are based on Hans Andersen's fairy tale about the Emperor of China and the nightingale. There is no inconsistency of style in *Le Chant*, composed in 1917 and the failure of the present recording, which is technically good, must be laid at the feet of Silvestri conducting the Philharmonia, HMV. ASD401. Stravinsky's directions should be followed precisely whereas Silvestri allows his own personality to dominate. This applies even more so to the coupling, *Symphony in Three Movements* (mono ALP1819).

### SCOTCH SYMPHONY

Mendelssohn may not be the height of fashion these days but those who follow its dictates, lose an immense amount of enjoyment. Fortunately many ballets have been set to his works so that we are not as likely to succumb to present whims. Both Balanchine's ballet, *Scotch Symphony*, and Keith Lester's *The Glen* used Mendelssohn's very beautiful *Third Symphony*, which has recently been issued with Klemperer conducting the Philharmonia, Columbia SAX2342, coupled to *The Hebrides Overture (Fingal's Cave)*. Although I greatly admire his Beethoven, I cannot reconcile myself to his somewhat heavy approach to these pieces of Mendelssohn. This composer needs the Beecham touch of an airy lightness combined with underlying strength, which, I feel, has been achieved by Peter Maag and the LSO in their entrancing performance of both works on Decca SXL2246. Both conductor and orchestra have surpassed themselves and I strongly recommend this disc (Columbia mono 33CX1736, Decca mono LXT5601).

BEDFORD CROWLE

## Books

### Drina Dances in New York by Jean Estoril. Hodder & Stoughton 12/6d.

With six books of adventures behind her, Drina, the heroine of this series, is growing up. On a trip to New York with her grandparents she finds herself attracted to a handsome shipboard acquaintance, and the romantic young fifteen-year-old experiences all the joys and pangs of first love. However, despite her pre-occupation with the handsome Grant Rossiter, Drina manages to find opportunities to dance, she even choreographs and dances her own first little ballet for a charity show in a theatre just off Broadway. Drina promises herself that one day she will return to New York, perhaps, if she does well enough in her chosen career, to dance at the great Metropolitan where her own mother had danced before her tragic death in a flying accident.

I hope that there will be many more books yet before Drina finally meets the man of her choice, a much more momentous



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WHAT'S NEW—Continued from page 23

decision for a dancer than for ordinary folk. Which makes me curious. How will Miss Estoril, the author, decide: to let her go on with her career and renounce marriage? Marry another dancer and continue dancing in the same Company, or marry outside her profession and be separated from her husband for months at a time whilst she is on tour. Like you, I must wait and see. E.H.

## PROGRAMMES

### THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

26th Sept. Tues. (eve) *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair)  
28th " Thurs. (eve) *Les Patineurs* (Gilpin)  
*Giselle* (Fonteyn, Blair)  
30th " Sat. (eve) *The Lady and the Fool* (Beriosova, Hynd)  
*Jabez and the Devil* (Sibley, Macleary, Grant)  
*Diversions* (Beriosova, Macleary, Lane, Usher)  
3rd Oct. Tues. (eve) *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Sones)  
4th " Wed. (eve) *Les Patineurs, Giselle* (Beriosova, Macleary)  
6th " Fri. (eve) *Les Patineurs* (Gilpin)  
*Giselle* (Nerina, Blair)  
11th " Wed. (eve) *Antigone* (Beriosova, Sones)  
*Symphonic Variations* (Fonteyn, Linden, Page, Blair, Shaw, Usher)  
*The Firebird* (Nerina, Sones)  
13th " Fri. (eve) *Ondine* (Beriosova, Macleary)  
17th " Tues. (eve) *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Sones)  
19th " Thurs. (eve) *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair)  
21st " Sat. (eve) *Petrushka* (Nerina, Grant)  
*Diversions* (Beriosova, Macleary, Lane, Usher)  
*Daphnis and Chloe* (Fonteyn, Blair)  
24th Oct. Tues. (eve) *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Sones)  
25th " Wed. (eve) *Antigone, Symphonic Variations, Firebird*  
26th " Thurs. (eve) *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair)  
27th " Fri. (eve) *Petrushka, Diversions, Daphnis and Chloe*

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" 2nd Oct. (two weeks) The Princess Theatre, Torquay  
" 16th " (two weeks) New Theatre, Oxford  
" 30th " Opera House, Manchester

### BALLET RAMBERT ON TOUR

w/c 25th Sept. The Little Theatre, Middlesbrough  
" 2nd Oct. The Empire Theatre, Sunderland  
" 9th " The New Theatre, Hull  
" 16th " The Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton  
" 30th " Theatre Royal, Exeter

### FESTIVAL BALLET ON TOUR

w/c 2nd Oct. The Coventry Theatre, Coventry  
" 9th " The Empire Theatre, Liverpool  
" 16th " The Gaumont Theatre, Ipswich  
" 30th " The Gaumont Theatre, Southampton

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by SONIA ROBERTS



Above: Ballerina on a postage stamp

Denmark's 501st stamp, issued on the eve of the Danish Festival in 1959, was of Margrethe Schanne in the famous leap from *La Sylphide*.

## MARGRETHE SCHANNE

of the Royal Danish Ballet

Opposite: the most recent picture of Margrethe Schanne, with Kjeld Noack as they appeared at the Midlands Festival of Ballet in Kermesse en Bruges.

Photo by courtesy of ABC Television

### CAREERS IN PICTURES

DANISH prima ballerina Margrethe Schanne, pride of the famous Royal Danish company is in fact only half Danish, on her mother's side, her father is French.

She was born in Copenhagen, home of the company she now heads, in 1921 and began dancing at the age of six at a local dancing school, in company with her sister.

In those early days Margrethe was quick to discover the commercial value of her art. Her favourite party piece was a version of the *Dying Swan* performed for the benefit of family and friends for which she was paid the Danish equivalent of a penny. "I am afraid that sometimes I died rather speedily to gain the reward to spend on sweets, and my mother used to withhold the coin saying that she wanted full value before paying!" she recalls with a smile.

When Margrethe's name was entered for the ballet School attached to the Royal Theatre it was without the knowledge of her father who disapproved strongly of dancing as a potential career. "I came home bursting with delight at the news that I had been accepted, but at the same time dreading the comment he might make. However his only remark was a simple 'Oh'." The ballerina is however happy to relate that her father soon became one of her strongest fans and supporters.

"I think one of the things which made my father change his mind about the Ballet School was the emphasis which was—and is placed on a good general education. He was particularly pleased to find that languages featured largely on the curriculum, as absurd though it seems our household never seemed to find the time for the family to be brought up bi-lingually."

"Although my father would have liked

to teach me languages, this was his profession, after I joined the ballet school the family saw relatively little of me. Like all scholars of eight I was expected to be at school promptly at 9.30 to work until four and then if needed to be back in the theatre in time to make up and warm up prior to a performance."

However despite the hard work entailed by such a schedule school days were happy days for Margrethe Schanne. She recalls her debut, for of course from the time of their entry the children are used on the stage not only for ballet but also opera and straight plays, which was as a singer playing the part of a boy in the Opera *Carmen*. "I can still remember the tune we had to sing", she warbled a few bars by way of demonstration, "but for the children the exciting thing was the long intervals between our being needed in the first act and then not again until near the end of the work. We made use of this time to explore every corner of the old building, furniture stores, wardrobes, passages and scenery depots. It was strictly against the rules of course but what child could resist such a temptation to play..."

Her debut as an adult was as Butterfly in *Valkyrie*, and then, on the strength of her qualifications as a mime, in the school's passing out examinations she was chosen to dance the Young Girl in *Spectre de la Rose*.

A highly developed ability to mime, Schanne says, enables dancer to give greater expression even in pure dancing roles, and she feels that her own scope in this field, comes largely from her strenuous grounding in Bournonville works. "Those who talk scornfully of the shortened Bournonville line or the limited appeal of

these ballets in the modern world, have I feel sure never taken the trouble to fully understand them—for I think that they inspire both dancers and audience over and over again." As to the question of the demi pointe which is used so often, I think we have to remember that in Bournonville's day ballet shoes were not as



Welcome home from a friend, Margrethe Schanne returning from the U.S.A.





#### in *Giselle* Act 1

left Niels Bjorn Larsen, Margrethe Schanne,  
Henning Kronstam, Kjeld Noack

strongly made as is possible today. I am sure that if he was working now, he would make much greater use of the full pointe and accept this as a natural piece of choreographic equipment.

Not surprisingly Schanne's favourite role dates from this period and is *La Sylphide*. She became a fully fledged soloist in 1942 and on the retirement of Margot Lander was invited to take over this important role.

Schanne debut days were difficult ones for all Danes, she recalls sounds of shooting from the streets—as the German's withdrew from the city.

"Of course, if I had known then what I know now about the role and its difficulties, I should have refused it. I was far too inexperienced to really do it justice, but then I was buoyed by youthful enthusiasm, I so much wanted to dance this particular role that I would never have suggested that I could not do it. However on the night before the performance I nearly did throw away my chance. I had a terrible dream in which I was called on to replace someone at short notice and couldn't find my tights although I looked everywhere for them. In my dream I was forced to go on stage without them. When I told my dream around the theatre everyone laughed and said that this was a success omen—and thank goodness they were right."

Despite her success with her own company the youthful Schanne was ambitious to try her talents elsewhere. She dearly wanted to add to the tuition of Harald Lander a period of study in Paris. Therefore when an offer came to join Roland Petit's company she applied for leave of absence. This is quite a serious undertaking for a Danish dancer, for the

State-run ballet company allows only two years in a whole career, and any dancer who goes abroad for longer (other than commitments undertaken in the 2½ months holiday) does so only by severing their formal connection with the Copenhagen Theatre and sacrificing their not inconsiderable pension rights. The leave of absence form for Margrethe Schanne was somewhat tardily dealt with in the manner of a venerable institution, and she arrived in Paris only to be greeted with a letter from Roland Petit saying that due to the delay he had been forced to engage another artist in her place.

"This was perhaps one of the worst moments of my life. I found myself alone in a strange city. I was not the star of an exciting new company, I was workless and with only limited resources. I thought of returning home, and then I realized that if I let adverse circumstances be my master then, I might as well say goodbye to all hopes of being a really great dancer ever. So I sent my family a slightly untruthful wire saying I was doing fine—and instead of the select hotel suite I had promised myself I set out to look for a really cheap room."

During this period she studied under Boris Kniaeff and with Preobrajenska before a second and eagerly seized opportunity to join the Ballet des Champs Elysées came in 1946.

With them Schanne danced a series of classical roles, including *Bluebird* with Babilée, and *Swan Lake*. She also danced the role of Hebe in *Les Amours de Jupiter*.

After the very strenuous touring and uncertain prospects of this company, with which she remained a year, Margrethe Schanne was taken ill and did not dance again for twelve months. "At the time it

seemed terrible", she mused, "but now I regard it as one of the useful times of my life. I had learned so much in the year that preceded my illness that I had not properly absorbed the value of my lessons. The enforced breathing space gave me a wonderful opportunity to really think about my work."

Schanne's career has been a series of persistent ups and downs—although of course a steady upward pattern culminated in her receiving the Danish equivalent of our knighthood for her services to the arts—but her emphatic reply to the question "if you had your life again would you be a dancer?" is yes. "It is a career in which there can sometimes be hardships and difficulties, a dancer's life is of necessity a very lonely one, for much as it is important to try to get away from the theatre and meet people in other walks of life, the time factor of classes and rehearsals often make this impossible. However I find that the satisfaction I obtain from dancing quite out-balances any disadvantages."

Although she admits to being superstitious—like all theatre folk—Margrethe Schanne has only one good luck emblem which she carries everywhere with her—her dog Muc. The present Muc, five years old and the third of his line, is a Skye terrier, purchased in Sweden. He goes everywhere with Margrethe, even to the theatre, where he has been trained to lie quietly at the base of a wardrobe and await her return. However during her recent visit to Britain for the Coventry Ballet Festival, Muc had to be left behind because of our stringent quarantine laws—so instead Margrethe carried a scarlet pocket handkerchief with a lifelike portrait of the little fellow in the centre.





## ROLES DANCED

**Bournonville**  
 Pas de trois in *La Ventana*  
 Pas de six in *Napoli*  
 Pas de sept in *A Folk Tale*  
 La Sylphide in *La Sylphide*  
 Cadet and Senorita in *Far from Denmark*  
 Eleonora in *Kermesse in Bruges*

**Galeotti**  
 French dance in *The Whims of Cupid and the Balletmaster*

Photos left and right :  
**Butterfly in *The Spring***  
 Photo Mydtskov

as **Medea in Birgit Cullberg's *Medea***



## DANISH CHOREOGRAPHERS

**Harald Lander**  
 Butterfly in *Valkyrie*  
 Butterfly in *The Spring*  
 The woman in *Rhapsodie*  
 Senorita in *Morning, Noon and Night*

**Walbom**  
 Colombine in *Dream Pictures*

**Walbom-Brenaa**  
 Pierette in *Les Millions de Arlequin*

**Borge Ralov**  
 May in *Twelve with the Mail Coach*  
 Red dance in *The Widow in the Mirror*  
 Princess in *Histoire d'un Soldat*

**Nini Theilade**  
*Concerto*

**Birger Bartholin**  
 2nd movement in *Symphonie Classique*  
 The Girl in *Parisiana*

**Niels Bjorn Larsen**  
 The Girl in *Drift*  
 Circus Princess in *The Tamed Lion Tamer*

**Frank Schaufuss**  
*Opus 13*

**Kirsten Ralov**  
*La Dame aux Camelias*

## CLASSICS

Odette in *Swan Lake Act II*  
 Giselle in *Giselle*  
 Blue Bird in *Aurora's Wedding*  
 Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*

**Fokine**  
 The Girl in *Le Spectre de la Rose*  
 Solo role in *Les Sylphides*  
 The Ballerina in *Petrouschka*

**Balanchine**  
 1st movement in *Symphony in C*  
 Somnambulist in *Night Shadow*  
 Solo role in *Serenade*

**Anton Dolin**  
 Taglioni and Grahn in *Pas de Quatre*

**J. Taras**  
*Dessins pour le Six*

**David Lichine**  
 Pas de deux classique in *Graduation Ball*

**Roland Petit**  
 Juno in *Les Amours de Jupiter*

**Birgit Cullberg**  
 Medea in *Medea*

Left to right :  
 as the Ballerina in *Petrouschka*  
 S. E. Jensen as the Moor

Photo : Mydtskov

as the Sleepwalker in *Night Shadow*

Photo : Mydtskov





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